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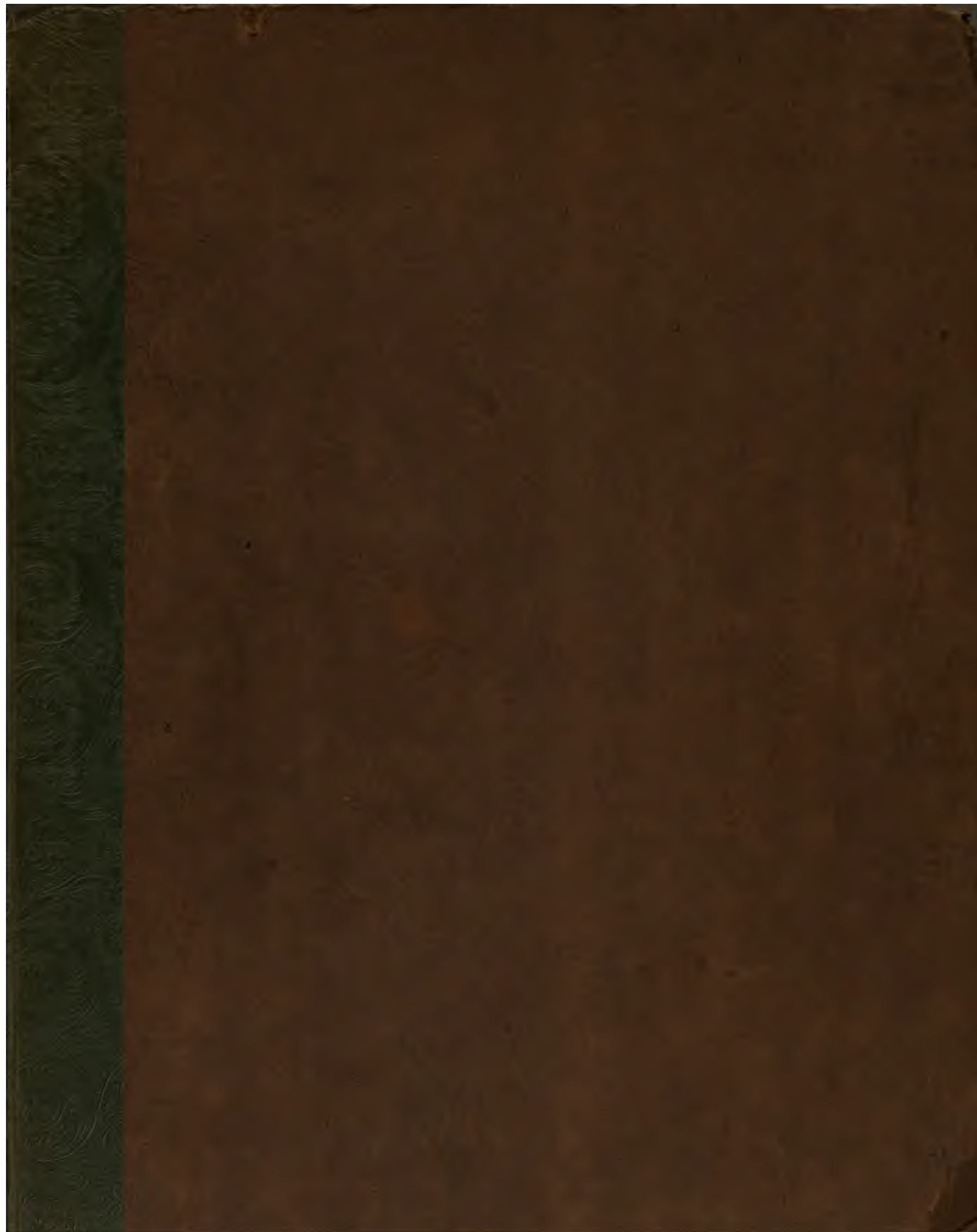
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**THE HISTORY**  
**OF**  
**THE HUNDRED OF WIRRAL.**



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THE HISTORY  
OF THE  
HUNDRED OF WIRRAL,

WITH A SKETCH OF

THE CITY AND COUNTY OF CHESTER,

COMPILED FROM THE EARLIEST AUTHENTIC RECORDS,

By WILLIAM WILLIAMS MORTIMER.

LONDON: WHITTAKER & Co. BIRKENHEAD: LAW & PINKNEY.

CHESTER: GEORGE PRICHARD, AND EDWARD PARRY.

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MDCCCXLVII





TO  
**WILLIAM JACKSON**  
OF BIRKENHEAD, AND OF CLAUGHTON MANOR HOUSE IN THE  
COUNTY OF CHESTER, ESQUIRE,  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR THE BOROUGH OF NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME.

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MY DEAR SIR,

To whom can any attempts to describe the Hundred of Wirral be more appropriately dedicated than to him, who has been mainly instrumental in the creation of its Metropolis?

Let me, then,—not only in acknowledgement of the great public benefits, which the Town of Birkenhead has received from your long and ceaseless devotion to its interests, but as a gratifying opportunity of recording the sense which I entertain of your private worth, and the value which I attach to your personal friendship, —INSCRIBE THIS VOLUME TO YOU;—to you, by whom the idea of its publication was originally suggested.

I have the honour to be,

My dear Sir,

Your faithful friend and servant,

W. WILLIAMS MORTIMER.

*Birkenhead, August 20th, 1847.*



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LAW & PINKNEY, PRINTERS, WATERLOO BUILDINGS, BIRKENHEAD.

## INTRODUCTION.

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**C**HESHIRE, avowedly one of the most interesting divisions of the Kingdom, has frequently afforded occupation for the Historian and the Antiquary. Of Chester—its capital City—and of some of the more favoured portions of the County, there are ample historical details; but of other parts little is known, and at the present moment it would be more easy to obtain a History of Switzerland, or of China, than one of Wirral, while the majority of readers are perhaps more familiar with the Cantons of the one, or the Provinces of the other, than with the topography and records of that Hundred. Mr. Ormerod, in his elaborate work upon Cheshire, endeavoured to supply this deficiency; but in the quarter of a century which has elapsed since his publication appeared, Townships, then almost deemed unworthy the notice of a single line, have assumed an important position in the statistics and consideration of the Kingdom.

The earlier chronicles of the County, though numerous, are very incomplete. It might have been expected from the general character of Gerard Barry, better known as Giraldus Cambrensis, and the frequent references made to the Journal of his Itinerary, when, accompanying Archbishop Baldwyn in 1189, to preach the Crusades through Wales, he visited Constance, Countess of Chester, that it would contain something worthy of notice relative to the County; but the erudite Chaplain, after simply stating that the Countess presented some cheese to the Archbishop, and that he saw an animal partly an ox, and partly a stag, and a woman, born without arms, who could sew with

her feet, adds, that he *heard* of a variety of things much more insignificant, yet infinitely more marvellous.

In general the Ancient Metrical Chronicles, from which alone the state of this County, previously to the fourteenth century, can be gathered, have, as specimens of historical composition, but little merit, although, by their combination, they form an almost uninterrupted series, and are occasionally written with great impartiality; yet in most instances they are the production of Monks, or of Minstrels, attached to the great houses of the land, and there were few Cheshire families of wealth or distinction, that had not had some of their members engaged under the banners of the Cross. The Minstrel who introduced a tale of chivalry, performed on the fields of Palestine, into his description of the county, or of the family of his hero, naturally excited by the allusion, feelings of personal interest, pleasing to his patron, and most probably profitable to himself. Hence the inflated panegyrics that so frequently occur in the early chronicles, and hence the value at which the services of their writers were estimated—often more than double those of the Clergy.\*

A material improvement took place in the Literature of the Country during the long and splendid Reign of Edward the Third. Among the earlier prose writers that then devoted themselves to historical composition, was Ralph Higden, a Monk of Chester, supposed by many to have been the author of the celebrated "Playes of Chester." Profiting by the labours of Roger, a Benedictine Monk of St. Werburgh's, who had previously, by order of his Bishop, written a British

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\* "At the feast of the fraternity of the Holie Crosse, at Abingdon, twelve attendant Priests are stated to have received fourpence each, while the twelve Minstrels who took part in the amusements were paid two shillings and fourpence each; eight Priests hired from Coventry, to assist in a ceremony at the Church of Mantoke Monastery, were paid two shillings each, while the six Minstrels were paid four shillings, and allowed to sup with the sub-prior, in addition to being provided with refreshments for themselves and their horses." On the same occasion, the Priest who preached, was paid for his sermon, only sixpence.—*See Warton's Introduction of Learning into England.*

Chronicle, he compiled a work upon Cheshire, entitled *Polychronicon*, which is certainly deserving of more credit than those of his predecessors. Many valuable facts are mentioned in the "*Polychronicon*;" but, although often quoted, its statements ought to be received with much caution, as in many instances they have been proved to be erroneous.

Two centuries after Higden, the *Holy Lyffe and Historeye of Saynt Warburge*, by Henry Braddshaa, of Chester Abbaye Monke, appeared. A few copies are yet extant, printed in 1521, by Richard Pynson, *Squyer, and Prenter unto the King's Noble Grace*, abounding with traditions, tales, and descriptions of miracles, performed by the patron Saint of Chester. Though called by Webb "our best Antiquary," his work cannot be considered of much authority; nor does the style, of which the following is a very favourable specimen, add to its value:—

The King gave for his Inheritance,  
 The Countie of Cheshire with its appurtenance;  
 By Victorie to winne the aforesaid Earldome,  
 Freely to governe it, as by Conquest Right;  
 Made a sure charter to him and his succession,  
 By the Sword of Dignitie to hold it with Might;  
 And to call a Parliament at his Will and Sight,  
 To order his subjects after true Justice,  
 As a prepotent Prince, and Statutes to devise.

Although the oft quoted *Annales Cestrienses*, by an unknown hand, which extend to 1255, including "all the renowned acts of Chester's Great Monarch, the famous Earl Randal," are in general found to be correct, it is evident, from a very cursory perusal, that they are not deserving of unlimited confidence. Too many of the existing "annals" are mere legendary Romances, almost unworthy of any notice. Their compilers had either deceived themselves through an excess of credulity, or intending to recommend their works to an ignorant age,—always

delighted with that which carries an air of the wonderful—they promulgated the exaggerated tales of fiction as historical truths ; and yet, with occasional grants, and *post mortem* inquisitions, the records of the Herald Office, and a few scattered manuscripts, they constituted all the materials from which, for Centuries, the History of Cheshire could be collected. The ecclesiastical enquiries, made by order of Henry the Eighth, and the Itineraries of Leland and of Camden, appear to have given an impulse to Topographical researches in different parts of the Kingdom ; and in Cheshire several parties were animated with the desire of contributing to the History of the County. At length, in 1656, the well-known work, "~~King's Vale~~ ~~Royal of Cheshire~~" was published. From its title it would seem to have been the production of King, but this is by no means the fact. It consists principally of two parts: the first,—a brief geographical account of the Rivers, the Towns, and a few of the larger Villages, with a very defective "Annals of the Gentry and City of Chester,"—was the work of William Smith, who held the office of Rouge Dragon Pursuivant, in the reign of Elizabeth ; the second,—by "William Webb, M.A., Clerk in the Mayor's Court, and Under Sheriff of the County," who commenced his collections about 1600, some time after Smith,—contains a short history of the Earls of Chester and their Barons, the Bishops of Mercia, and of Chester, and an account of the Municipal Government of the City, together with a very short description of each hundred. The manuscripts of Smith and Webb falling into the hands of Daniel King, who was an Engraver of some repute, he made several embellishments in his own line of business, and with the addition of a very trifling quantity of literary matter, written in 1655—6, by Samuel Lee, † expressly for the work, "out of that exuberant and natural love which I always

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† Lee frequently writes in a most contemptuous manner of his predecessors : after giving a list of the Earls of Chester, he adds, " Thus have I given the catalogue of all the Earls of Chester to this day ; I have read of others, but because more sober and discreet authors, not addicted to the tiffany fictions of Bards and Monks, have yielded us no solid confirmation of their Times and Dominions, lay them to sleep in their Monkish Cradles, and leave them to be rockt by Ponticus Virunnius, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and Hector Boethius,—persons more fit to tend babes with their rattles and tales, than to write history."

bare unto that soil, as being the seed-plot of my ancestors, and the present habitation of my alliance," ushered them into the world as "King's Vale-Royal." After speaking in no favourable terms of the work, Sir William Dugdale\* styles the compiler an ignorant silly knave, an expression which Dr. Gower hopes the worthy knight meant only in the antiquated sense of fellow or servant—as the old translations of the New Testament designate "Paul, the knave of Christ." The learned doctor does not, however, spare the engraver, or his volume, which he describes as the "Tower of Babel of Cheshire;" and, certainly, the confusion, and the want of arrangement in the valuable materials of which it is composed, can hardly be exceeded.

In 1673 Sir Peter Leycester published his "*Historical Antiquities*," in two books. "The first treating in general of Great Brettain and Ireland; the second, containing Particular Remarks concerning Cheshire, Faithfully Collected out of Authentick Histories, Old Deeds, Records, and Evidences." It is a production of great research, every page abounding with references and authorities; but, with the exception of the Hundred of Bucklow, it is confined to the bare genealogical details of the Monarchs of England, Ireland, and Wales, the Earls of Chester, and the Officers of the Palatinate Earldom. From a perusal of some of Sir Peter's manuscripts, in the possession of Mr. Hostage of Chester, it is evident that it was the intention of the Baronet

He refers many occurrences to astronomical events—Thus speaking of the execution of King Charles I, nineteenth Earl of Chester, he says, "his death I shall fix for future ages with an eclipse of the Sun, in Scorpio 12.24—which I saw at Oxford above four digits, eight months after, viz:—25th October, 1649, one hour forty-five minutes P.M." Yet notwithstanding his boasted accuracy, he is frequently incorrect;—as in the date assigned by him for the foundation of Birkenhead Priory, where an error occurs of nearly a hundred years.

\* The Historian of Warwickshire, who intended to have published a work on Cheshire, in conjunction with William Vernon, by whom the Antiquities of the County were investigated for that purpose.—*See Harl. MSS.* 1697.

to have extended his *Historical Antiquities*, to other portions of the County; but, unfortunately, he had placed under the head of "The Basse Issue of Hugh Cyveliook, Earl of Chester," one "Amicia, the wife of Raufe Manwaring, sometime Judge of Chester,"—about the year 1177. This so roused the indignation of his cousin, Sir Thomas Manwaring of Over Peover, who claimed descent from the ancient Norman Earls of Chester, by the marriage of one of his ancestors with this Amicia—that a long controversy took place between the literary Baronets. No less than six pamphlets were published by the zealous disputants in support of their respective opinions, which formed the subject of a discussion in the Courts of Law at Chester, in 1675, when the legitimacy of Amicia was established. Notwithstanding the decision of the Judges, and the fact that the lady had been dead nearly five hundred years, the contest was renewed by Sir Peter, and it continued until his death.

A century elapsed without any addition being made to the *Topography* of the County, though frequent endeavours were made to effect that desirable object. In 1771, and again in 1778, Dr. Gower, of Chelmsford,\* circulated a "Sketch of the Materials for a New History of Cheshire," in which, after enumerating all that had been done by previous collectors, he solicits the assistance of his countrymen "in erecting a lasting monument to their honors, on a plan entirely different from any other Provincial History." His appeal was unsuccessful, and nothing, of any authority, on the County appeared,—for the "History of Cheshire," published in two volumes, in 1778, by a Dr. Partridge, was only a reprint of the greater portion of the *Vale Royal*, retaining all its errors and want of arrangement,—until the Messrs. Lysons, in 1810, devoted an entire volume of their *Magna Britannica* to Cheshire.

\* Dr. Gower died at Bath, in 1780; his "Materials" became the property of Dr. Wilkinson, who declining their publication, sold them to William Latham, Esq. F.R.S. He announced his intention to publish them, but ultimately did not do so, and when examined in 1809, by Mr. Ormerod, they were "found much scattered and in a state which defied all attempts to reduce them to anything like sense."

In 1819 the splendid volumes of Mr. Ormerod were announced, by subscription. This truly valuable work was the labour of many years, and in general very correct; but the number of copies was limited, and the price—for the larger size, Fifty Guineas, and for the smaller, Twenty-five—preventing their general circulation, they are now seldom found, except in the libraries of the principal families, or in the public institutions of the County; in fact, only two hundred and fifty copies were printed for sale. In 1826, Mr. Henshall, a gentleman connected with the public press, published a quarto “History of Cheshire,” but which might more properly have been denominated one of Chester, for that portion which refers to the County is very limited, and consists principally of abbreviations, frequently erroneous, from the work of Mr. Ormerod. A much better production is one by Mr. Hemingway, which appeared shortly after, on the City of Chester, occasionally referring to the County; but it is burdened with long and uninteresting lists of Abbots, Bishops, Mayors, and other functionaries. The literary labours of these gentlemen—if it be not improper to class them together—were published at nearly the same time, and they are the only modern works from which the History of the County can be gleaned. But in one respect they differ materially from the Volume here introduced. Hemingway almost entirely confines himself to Chester. The other two—Ormerod, immeasurably superior to Henshall,—have also amply detailed every thing connected with the City, but their notices of Wirral are very circumscribed. On the contrary, in the following pages Chester will be as slightly referred to, as is consistent with its importance, and its necessary connection with the general history of the County, and that of Wirral.

This Hundred has hitherto attracted little attention. The earlier Itinerants avoided it. Leland appears anxious to escape from it, and it is very questionable whether Camden visited Wirral at all. There was indeed at that period little to render it interesting. But recently disafforested, and even then, nearly a wilderness; without any town of the least importance, with-



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out any monastic remains, except the dissolved Priory of Birkenhead, and the mouldering and almost inaccessible ruins of Stanlaw—the disappointed Antiquary would hasten from a field, which presented so little scope for his inquiries, and dwell on the rich stores of the neighbouring city, that afforded such ample range for the exercise of his favorite pursuits.

Such was the condition of the Hundred of Wirral,—almost deserted by its baronial proprietors,—when visited by Leland and Webb, and it had not greatly improved at the time of Mr. Ormerod's residence therein, when, three centuries afterwards, he was preparing his History of Cheshire—the latest work which contains even the slightest description of Wirral.

The population of the Hundred in 1801 was only 10,444; in 1811 it had increased to 11,579; in 1821 it was returned at 13,835; and in 1831 at 19,014. The census of 1841 exhibited a return of 33,047—a number which by no means corresponds with the present population, for the inhabitants of the Cheshire shores of the Mersey alone, now far exceed those of all the entire Hundred, four years since. The great intercourse between Liverpool and Cheshire, which has resulted from the introduction of steam-packets, has caused improvements on the eastern side of Wirral, to an extent almost incredible. On “a bare and rugged rock, backed by a few hundred acres of poor land,” as “the little Hamlet of Birkenhead,” was not inaptly described some thirty years since, now stands a town, which, in a few years hence, will in all probability exceed any in the County in wealth, population, and national importance. But these alterations and improvements in Wirral, have not been confined to the banks of the Mersey; they have extended into the interior, and other parts of the Hundred, where new Colonies are rising up in various directions, and railroads are projected to places, which a quarter of a century, since had not a name,—which did not then exist.

The legislative contest which occurred in 1844, relative to the great public works, then commencing at Birkenhead and the neighbourhood, having attracted much notice, the public appeared to require a work wherein the present state of Wirral, and the circumstances which had led to the recent important changes in the Hundred, might be described. And as there was no separate Historical account of the district, it was considered the volume would be incomplete without such details; to which has been prefixed a slight sketch of the general History of England, so far as regards Cheshire. The importance of Birkenhead justifies its description having extended beyond the space which would otherwise have been assigned to that town. Of its ancient history much has been said, and its present condition has been fully detailed; but of its future prospects, bold indeed would be the man who will venture to prophecy. "How shall we dare to gaze into the magic spectrum of futurity, or attempt to divine what may be the onward progress of Birkenhead's prosperity? The astronomer is enabled to calculate the velocities, and to measure the orbits, of the heavenly bodies; the engineer is enabled to make his surveys, and from his knowledge of the laws which govern matter, he is enabled to carry out his designs; but there are certain fixed laws and philosophical data by which they are guided. Who shall attempt to define what may be the rate of increase, or the rate of extension of human enterprise, upon which alone depends the extent of the prosperity of a commercial community such as this."\*

In preparing this volume, the author would most gratefully acknowledge the advantages he has derived from the literary labours of Mr. Ormerod. It was indeed impossible to be otherwise than materially assisted by them, for that indefatigable historian had sought through all the *post mortem* inquiries,

\* Extract from the speech of Sir Philip de Malpas Grey Egerton, Bart., M.P., on the occasion of laying the foundation stone of the Birkenhead Docks, 23rd October, 1844.

and examined all the genealogical records of Cheshire. There was hardly a nobleman, or a gentleman of the County, by whom he had not been aided in his researches relative to their manors, and to their families, and the result of these assiduous enquiries,—forming the only standard work to which reference could be made—was, of course, not to be neglected. The other publications which have already been named, have been frequently referred to, and extracts have occasionally, when requisite, been made and acknowledged.

In addition to these printed sources of information, many of the Manuscripts relative to Cheshire have been consulted. These, which are very numerous, abound with local details of great interest, but they have been written by various parties, and are now very much scattered among the leading families of the county. Two epitomes have been made of a portion of them; one by Dr. Williamson, under the title of *Villare Cestriense*, descriptive of the descent of the principal families, is now in the British Museum; the other by Bishop Gastrel, entitled *Notitia Cestrienses*, is confined to the Ecclesiastical Institutions and Charitable Endowments of the County. One copy is in the Diocesan library at Chester, and another in the hands of the representatives of his family. Though in general correct, it has been found in several instances erroneous; a circumstance which most probably originated from the right reverend Prelate's having addressed circular letters to his Clergy requesting information, and the replies, he received,—occasionally mere transcripts of the opinions or statements of the parish clerks or schoolmasters—were adopted by the Bishop.

The MSS. of the four RANDLE HOLMES, which now occupy no less than two hundred and fifty-eight volumes of the Harleian collection, extend over a period of a century, during which those four generations of antiquaries held situations in the Herald Office of Chester. They contain a mass of

local information recorded with a truthful accuracy, entitling them to every respect.\* Many of the leading houses of the County have their own family evidences and records, while several hundred tracts and MSS. connected with Cheshire may be found in the Lansdowne, Cottonian and Harleian Collections.

Such were the materials out of which the antiquary must have sought for the history of the County of Chester, and for that division which is more particularly the subject of this volume, he would in most instances have sought in vain.

By the translation of the Domesday Survey, in the Appendix, it will be seen that the Hundred of Wirral was partitioned between the Church and a small number of the Conqueror's barons. The mere names of some of them is now all that is known, and this is, alone, supplied by that invaluable document. Of others, more particulars have descended to the present day; but before enquiring who were the successors of the Norman's followers, or entering into the history of the townships allotted to them, such have been the mutations in the names they have borne, that a few words on this subject may, perhaps, not be inappropriate. The difference between the names now adopted, and those used by the same families about the period of the Conquest, and the great variation which frequently occurs, subsequently in the spelling, renders this the more requisite. This difficulty of identifying parties and places, is, in no small degree, enhanced by the same word, occasionally, occurring even in the same deed, in four or five different modes. The name of the venerable founder of Magdalen College, Oxford, has been spelled in no less than nineteen different forms,† and in a Manu-

\* Among the more valuable manuscripts of the county are the Wilbraham papers, commenced in 1542, by Sir Roger Wilbraham, and continued by his several successors to 1732, now in possession of George Wilbraham, Esq., of Delamere House, the head of that very ancient family.

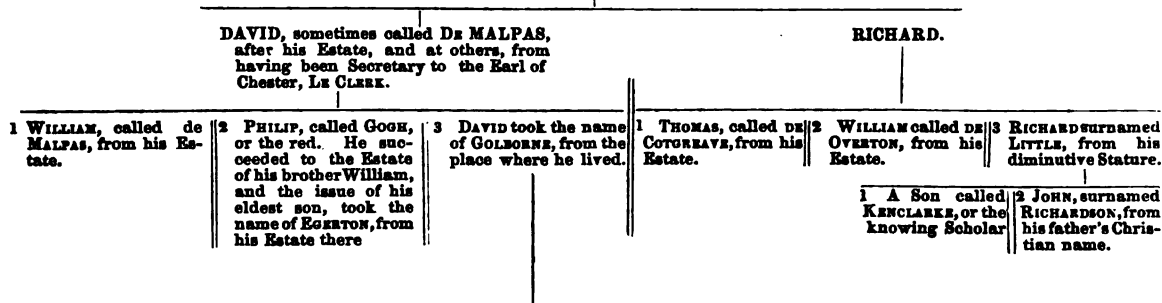
† That is supposing the name to have been Waynflete, for it is not clear whether Patten or Barbour was the proper family name of the celebrated prelate, who first assumed the former appellation, from the

script of Sir Peter Leycester's, now at Peover Hall, he enumerates no less than one hundred and thirty-one combinations of letters, which have been used in the word Mainwaring, since the foundation of the house by Ranulphus de Mesnilverin. In examining the various grants connected with the ancient priory of Birkenhead, Hamon de Masci—if such indeed be his name—appears in forty-seven different forms; and in one short grant the word Birkenhead is spelled in four different modes.\* Whatever may have been the cause of this variation in the orthography of proper names, the difficulty thereby occasioned, in modern research, has been further increased by the unauthorised adoption of surnames. Cheshire has long been remarkable for the number of its resident families of great antiquity, but to trace the descent of the junior branches is by no means an easy task. Adopting the custom of France and Normandy, where it was the practice for the eldest son alone to use the father's name,—the younger sons adopting those of the estates allotted to them, or afterwards acquired by marriage or by bequest—the brothers of a family were often found bearing very different surnames,—some patrimonial, some derived from possessions, others from personal qualities, or peculiar acquirements. In CAMDEN's *Remaines* will be found an abstract of the pedigree of a most distinguished Cheshire family, which illustrating these changes, is thus introduced by that eminent antiquary "for varietie and alteration of names in one Familie vpon diuers respects, I place of his birth, when he entered into holy orders,—“As it was a fashiou” according to Holinshed, “in those days, for a learned spiritual man to take awaie the fathers surname, were it never so worshipful or ancient, and give him for it the name of the towne he was borne in.”

\* Mr. Markland (*Archæologia*, vol. 18, p. 108,) would conjecture that these variations were intentional, could any probable motive be assigned for such a practice. Mr. Lower has little doubt that what are now considered irregularities in the orthography of our ancestors, were then thought to be ornamental; a species of taste somewhat akin to the fastidiousness observable in modern composition, which as studiously rejects the repetition of words and phrases. The Rev. Mark Noble, in his work on the College of Arms, very summarily disposes of the difficulty “The orthography of names is of little consequence, the spelling of names was not fixed, for ages after the Conquest, every one writing them as he pleased.”

will give you one Cheshire example for all, out of an antiente Rolle belonging to Sir William Brereton, which I saw twentie years since :”—

WILLIAM LE BELWARD, Lord of a Moiety of MALPAS had two Sons.\*



A son, who took the name of GOODMAN, or rather received it from others, on account of the excellence of his character.

From this it will be seen that in three generations, among eleven persons, descended from the same individual, there were no less than thirteen different surnames. Well might Camden exclaim “verily the gentlemen of those so very different names would not so easily be induced, to believe they were descended from one house, if it were not warranted by so antiente a proof.” Criticism would therefore be wasted in examining too minutely the nomenclature of the following pages. For the orthography generally adopted therein, sufficient authorities exist; but when the words Roff, Rauffe, Ralph, Randall, Ranulf, Randolph, Radulphus, and others, of a similar character, are indiscriminately applied to one and the same indivi-

\* This short pedigree, in which the Genealogist will recognise the ancestry of several ancient families, is remarkable, as shewing in one family, and within the compass of a century, no less than five descriptions of names :—*Foreign*, as BELWARD; *local*, as DE MALPAS, DE COTGRAVE; *paternal*, as RICHARDSON; from personal qualities, as GOGH and LITTLE; and from *mental attainments*, as GOODMAN and KENCLARKE. Camden, from whom it is compiled, seems not to have been aware that WILLIAM LE BELWARD had three sons; the second, named ROBERT, who married the daughter of ROBERT FITZ NIGEL, Baron of Halton, had the Manor of Calmundelei given to him, and fixing his residence there, assumed that name. He was the ancestor of the noble families of Cholmondeley, and of Delamere. From the earliest mention of “Calmundelei,” in the Domesday Book, there were no less than twenty-five variations in the name, before it finally settled down into Cholmondeley. The name of the ancient Lord of Malpas yet exists in Cheshire, in the person of PHILIP-LE-BELWARD EGERTON, eldest son of Sir Philip De Malpas Grey Egerton, Bart. M. P.—the direct descendant of the above-named William de Malpas, whose wife, Beatrice, is generally considered to have been a daughter of Hugh Cyveliock, Earl of Chester, although by Burke, and others, she is called the daughter of the Earl Randal, (de Meschines).

dual, let not the reader be offended if he should, in this volume, meet with names different to those by which he may have elsewhere found the same person designated.

It has not been deemed requisite to enter into detail, relative to the various circumstances mentioned in the earlier part of the following pages, as they are slightly connected with the county of Chester; but the authorities which have been consulted are generally given, so that an easy reference can be made to works wherein the several events are more fully described.

If it be asked, why the compilation of this volume devolved upon him who now submits it to the public, the answer, if it be not satisfactory, will at least have the merit of being short. The continued absence of any person, whose time, whose inclination, or whose avocation might have led to such an undertaking, alone induced the writer to yield to the solicitations of several friends, and endeavour to arrange the scattered fragments contained in the various works to which allusion has been made, connecting with them the existing state of the different Townships in Wirral. He the more readily complied with the request, from having been for several years engaged in statistical pursuits, and from having the honour of an acquaintance with the Gentry of Wirral, at least as extensive as any other person in the Hundred. Such alone were his motives, and such is his only excuse for this, his first appearance as an historical writer,—or should he not rather say,—compiler, an occupation by no means in accordance with his usual professional engagements; a circumstance which is here mentioned, not so much as an apology for imperfections, too numerous to be justified, as for the delay in the publication, caused by unforeseen and repeated interruptions, which the exigencies of that profession, rendered unavoidable.

In a work of this nature, it must be apparent to every reader that the co-opera-

tion of various parties is absolutely requisite, and the most pleasing part of this introduction yet remains—the expression of the most grateful acknowledgments for the ability, research, and promptitude with which numerous applications and enquiries have been answered. The literary stores of the most distinguished of the Nobility and Gentry of the County have, at all times, been liberally thrown open for perusal and for extracts ; while from the resident Gentry of the Hundred, every facility and assistance have been given, upon every occasion, in extracting from their evidences. There have been, it is true, exceptions, but fortunately they are confined to two—to two whose pre-eminent situations in the County, rendered the refusal of support by the one, as improbable, as the declaration by the other, that such a publication was “superfluous,” appears inexplicable.

Repeating the well-deserved acknowledgments for the assistance hitherto so liberally afforded towards the compilation of this volume, it is respectfully intimated that as circumstances now lead to the probability that another Edition will shortly appear, the obligation would be greatly increased by the transmission of any corrections which may be requisite, or the notice of any omissions which may have occurred. From all, the communication of any alteration, or amendment, which friendship or criticism—a desire either to rectify the past, or to improve the future—may suggest, would be most thankfully received ; and the desirable object would be thereby attained of being enabled to compile another, and a better History of that important division of Cheshire—the Hundred of Wirral.

*Birkenhead, August 2, 1847.*





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## History of the Hundred of Wirral.



THE faint traces of past ages that are yet discernable around us, together with all traditional and recorded history, point to Central Asia as the cradle of our species,—the fountain head, from which the various nations of the earth have descended. But there are no means of conjecturing, with any approach to certainty, the period at which the great primitive wave of population, generally denominated the Gaelic, first set in upon the western regions of the world. It is the opinion of those who have most attentively examined the subject, that it had overflowed the great continent of Europe, as well as the peninsulas of Spain and Italy, fully a thousand years before the Christian era.

There can be no doubt, that Britain was originally peopled from the neighbouring shores of Gaul. The far greater portion of the names of mountains, lakes, and rivers, in both the British Islands, are, to this day, descriptive and significant only in some Gaelic language. The appellations of these vast and permanent parts of nature, are commonly observed to continue as unchanged as the objects themselves. It is therefore reasonable to believe, that a people using that language were the prior colonists, or earliest inhabitants, of these islands. The position of the two countries, the testimony of ancient authorities, the resemblance of manners and customs, the identity of religious doctrines and practices, above all, the clear and strong testimony of language, prove



the one people to have sprung from the other. The original name of our Island is that by which it continues to be designated in the language of the Scottish Gael, the unmixed descendants of the primitive inhabitants. By them it is still called *Albinn*, a name nearly similar to that of *Albion*,\* the denomination by which it is first mentioned by Aristotle, the most ancient of the classic writers that have treated upon England.

The southern Coasts of Britain, from Kent to Cornwall, appear to have been peopled before either the midland or the northern parts were penetrated. As the descendants of the original settlers increased in numbers, and as new bands successively arrived from the mother country, the backwoods were gradually cleared towards the north and west until the whole island was inhabited. In a similar manner, Ireland was, doubtless, peopled from the opposite coasts of England and Wales.

To one of these bands, that thus overran Ireland, was the epithet "Scot," first applied. This word, of which, however, different interpretations are given, is most probably the same as the modern Gaelic term of *Scuit* or *Scaoit*, signifying a wandering horde, strictly descriptive of the restless disposition evinced by the early invaders. A body of these Scots, several ages afterwards, passing from Ireland to Scotland, conferred their name on that country.

But Scotland had been previously peopled in part, not only on the eastern shores, but in the interior, by the gradual movement towards the north of the tide of population from south Britain. The general name given to the inhabitants of the northern part of Britain was not Scots, but *Caledonians*, that is, *Caoilldaion*, or men of the woods. They are spoken of by the Roman writers as divided into the *Deucaledones* and the *Vecturiones*, the former of these designations is nearly the same as the Gaelic *Duchaoilldaoin*, literally "the inhabitants of the woods." It was applied to the mountaineers in the northwest part of the country, or what is now generally termed the Highlands, to distinguish them from the inhabitants of the plains. These latter were denominated *Vecturiones*, a word smoothed down from the Gaelic *Uachtarich*, that is, the people of that part of the country called *Uachtar*, the name given to the Lowlands. The term is, indeed, still preserved in the appellation of the

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\**Albion* is evidently an adaptation of the word *Albion*: *Isa*, meaning in Gaelic an Island; and *Alb*, white; together, the white island,—a name, doubtless, given to the cliffs of chalk that present themselves to the opposite shores of Gaul.

mountainous ridge *Drumuachtar*, at which the descent of the country towards the east commences. Some hold the Roman name *Picti* to be merely a corruption of *Uachtarich*, and therefore the same with the *Vecturiones*. This has, however, been much disputed, many deriving it from a Latin word signifying painting, and consequently applicable to the inhabitants of Scotland, who continued the practice of painting themselves long after it had been abandoned by the south Britons.

Frequent hostilities took place between the Scots and the Picts, the latter being often assisted by the Britons. It was to repel an attack of their united forces, that the Scots obtained the assistance of Fergus, an eminent Irish warrior, who having landed a considerable body of troops from Ireland, was unanimously chosen king of the Scots.

All, however, that can be gathered from the most minute investigation of the early history of these Islands, leads to the opinion that the primitive colonists, the first possessors of Great Britain,—be they denominated Britons, Caledonians, Picts, Scots,—were of Gaelic origin.\* With the exception of these general facts, the whole of British history is lost in impenetrable darkness, until within half a century of the Christian era.

At the time of Cæsar's landing, A. C. 55, Britain was inhabited by a multitude of petty nations, of whom the Roman historians have preserved the names of upwards of forty. The number of such tribes living in a state of lawless independence is, alone, a proof of their barbarism. In the maritime provinces to the southward of the Thames, colonies, probably recent from Belgic Gaul, first introduced tillage. They retained the names of their parent tribes on the continent, and surpassed the other Nordes in the manners of civil life. The greater part of the inhabitants of the interior raised no corn, and appear to have been more fierce and rude than the people on the shores. They subsisted on milk and flesh, and clothed themselves with the skins of the beasts which they destroyed for food. In their domestic life, they were little removed above promiscuous intercourse. It is in vain to inquire into the forms of government

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\* It is so unfashionable to use the term Gael or Gaul, that it may not be unnecessary to state that it has been preferred to that of Kelt or Celt, because the latter was only a particular class or division of the Gauls. The Kelts were the *Cuoltick*, or the inhabitants of a woody country, so called from *Cuail*, a wood, the same elementary word that enters into the composition of *Caledonia*. Cunningham, in his introduction to the "Lives of Eminent Englishmen," has treated upon this subject at great length, and with much ability.

existing among a people in such a wretched state of uncivilization. The Britons had a government rather occasional than permanent, in which various political principles prevailed by turns. The power of eloquence, of valour, of experience, sometimes even of beauty, over the multitude, for a time threw them into the appearance of a democracy. When their humour led them to follow the counsel of their elders, the community seemed to be aristocratic. The necessities of war, or the popularity of a fortunate commander, invested him, in times of danger, with a sort of monarchical power, limited rather by his own prudence, or by the patience of his followers, than by laws, or even customs. It is an abuse of terms to bestow the name of a free government upon such a state of Society; men in such circumstances might live without restraint, but they lived without security.

Two of these nations were settled in Cheshire,—one, the *Cangii*, a tribe of little importance, and of whom still less is known; the other, the *Carnavii*, or *Carnabii*, which subsequently extended itself into a large portion of the neighbouring country.

The etymology of the early designation of the county of Chester and of its inhabitants, has been the subject of frequent discussions among the learned. Antiquarians have so completely exhausted their ingenuity in support of their respective theories, that little of novelty can now be advanced. Dr. Whittaker, whose investigations into ancient topography are so well known, and so generally considered entitled to respect, maintains that the name of *Carnabii*, *Carnavii*, or *Corinavii*, by which the inhabitants of this and several of the adjacent counties were designated previously to the Roman invasion, was derived from the peculiar shape or formation of the coasts between the estuaries of the Dee and the Mersey. “Within the peninsula of Wirral, and on the contiguous parts of the county,” he observes “the Carnabii resided. From thence they originally sallied out and spread their dominions over the rest of the county, and the whole of Shropshire, and the neighbouring parts of Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, and Flintshire. The Britons residing on similar promontories or horns of Cornwall and of Caithness, had doubtless, from the same cause acquired the name of Carnabii, or the men of the promontory.”

This theory is, however, contradicted by Mr. Owen and others, who contend that the peninsula of Wirral was too insignificant to confer a name upon a people so numerous, or a country so extensive as that of the Carnavii. They would rather deduce it from *Corain*, winding, and *air*, stream. A combination of these two words

would give one descriptive of the inhabitants of the bank of a winding river, and therefore strictly applicable to a people whose residence was on the banks of the Dee and the Severn. The accuracy of these hypotheses has been warmly maintained by their several supporters, but as their arguments had little effect on their opponents, and cannot be considered conclusive, the question will most probably for ever remain undecided. Camden, who devoted much attention to the subject two hundred years since, frankly avowed he was entirely ignorant of the derivation of the word, under which was comprehended the entire country between the cities of Chester and Worcester.

The Cangii, "a nation that has been so long and so much sought for," Camden supposes were also situated in Cheshire, and he supports his opinion by reference to some "twenty sowes of Lead" that had been found on the shores of the Mersey near *Runcorn*, and at *Rock Savage*. Others, similar to these, had been previously found on the shores of the Dee; and they all bear the following inscription, commemorative of a victory over the Cangii:—

On the one side.

IMP. DOMIT. AVG. GER. DE  
CEANG.

And on the other.

IMP. VESP. VII. T. IMP. V.  
COSS.

In cutting the railway between Chester and Crewe, a few years since, several of these ingots or pigs of Lead were discovered near Boughton, bearing a similar description; and there is reason to believe that others had been previously found by the workmen, and sold. Dr. Leigh suggests, in confirmation of the opinion that Cheshire was the seat of the Cangii, that in various parts of the county, their name is yet to be traced in that of several places, such as *Conghill*, *Conghall*, *Congleton*. If, however, these were the mere tribe of shepherds they are usually considered to have been, a victory over them would scarcely have deserved such a memorial.

Whatever may have been the origin of the Carnavii, or the derivation of their name, it is certain that the Romans found this part of the country in their possession.

Cæsar, as remarked by Tacitus, rather showed the Romans the way into Britain than put them in possession of it, for twenty years after his decease no tribute was exacted from the nominally conquered Britons. Nearly a century elapsed

before Ostorius Scapula was enabled to subdue the Silures and the Ordovices, nations inhabiting Wales and the borders.

The Carnavii were so powerful as to require a strong military force to keep them in subjection. For this purpose Chester was strongly fortified, and in the forty-third year of the present era made by Claudius the station of the Twentieth Legion, surnamed VICTRIX.

At this time the towns of the Britons were very insignificant. Strabo, speaking of their cities, says, "when they have enclosed a large circuit in their forests with felled trees, they build within, houses for themselves and hovels for their cattle." And Cæsar, in the fifth book of his Commentaries on the Wars in Gaul, says, "a town among the Britons is nothing more than a thick wood, fortified with a ditch and ramparts, to serve as a place of retreat against the incursions of their enemies."

It required all the skill and attention of Ostorius to retain possession of his conquests on the borders of Wales; and he ultimately died from vexation at the little progress he had made against the enemy. Chester was the extreme verge of the position the Romans could maintain with security: their other conquests were, in fact, confined to the ground occupied by their troops. The complete subjugation of Cheshire can hardly be dated at an earlier period than the year 78, when North Wales, and also Anglesey, the sacred seat of the Druids, the great source of the spirit of resistance, fell beneath the conquering troops of Julius Agricola.

In the division of Britain into provinces, Cheshire was placed in the district called Flavia Cæsariensis

The Romans having established two military stations in the country of the Carnavii, one at *Chester* and the other at *Condote*, now by almost universal consent considered to be *Kinderton*, were thus enabled to keep the neighbouring Britons in peaceful subjugation; indeed, they were regarded more as defenders than as conquerors, and the British tribes gladly accepted that protection which the Romans, in defence of their own conquests, afforded them against the aggressions of the Welsh and other hostile nations.

The Roman provinces, on several occasions when part of their troops were withdrawn into Gaul, suffered severely from the assaults of the various surrounding tribes. The Frisian the Frank and the Saxon pirates on the south and east, the Scots and the Picts on the north, and the Welsh on the west, hailed the temporary absence of the

Roman forces with joy, as it afforded them an opportunity of ravaging their provinces and carrying the inhabitants of the British towns into slavery.

The protection thus extended to the Britons caused a great attachment on the part of the latter. Numbers of British youth\* entered into the Roman service, and had been absolutely employed by them even in Britain; on the other hand, many of the victors intermarried with the Britons, and on the evacuation of the Roman troops, remained in Chester and the other British cities.

The progressive decline of the Roman Empire caused a gradual diminution in the number of their troops in Britain, until finally, about the middle of the fifth century, the British were entirely abandoned to their fate.

The retirement of the Roman forces was soon found by the Britons to be a most serious calamity: an almost total dissolution of order, law, and government, followed their departure. This wretched country, though adorned with so many monuments of Roman art and industry, crowded with cities, towns, and villages, communicating with each other by roads that to this day we view with astonishment, and which modern ingenuity only attempts to rival; yet, from the withdrawal of their protectors, and the absence of the flower of the British youth, was plunged into the most deplorable confusion and despair. The families of the British princes had either become extinct, or they were so blended with the common people that few could lay any claim or right to the reins of government. The inhabitants had become a timid and a disorderly race; all that were accustomed to arms had been drawn by Honorius to aid in the defence of the imperial city itself: those that remained fell an easy prey to the surrounding piratical tribes, whom they were unable to resist. In these distressing circumstances the Britons applied to the Romans for assistance; ambassadors were despatched into Gaul where Ætius, the renowned general of Valentinian, was then prefect, with a petition to the following effect, "*To Ætius, thrice Consul*, the groans of the Britons: the barbarians drive us to the sea, the sea throws us back on the swords of the barbarians, so that we have nothing left us but the wretched choice of being drowned or butchered."

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\* The *Notitia Provinciaram* gives a List of ten bodies of British Troops, employed under the latter Roman Emperors, among whom several of the *Carnarii* are named. Broughton in his *Eccl. Hist.* 166, Douay edit. says, at the sacking of Jerusalem, Vespasian had 20,000 British Troops.

The entreaties of the Britons were as inefficacious as their lamentations. *Ætius* was unable to render them any assistance; his own prefecture was too much endangered to permit any permanent division of his forces. Some trifling assistance was, however, temporarily extended to the Britons; but the inhabitants of their principal cities and towns were at the same time informed, that they must no longer rely upon the Romans for protection. At length, in 446, the last of the Roman troops were withdrawn, and the Britons formally absolved from their allegiance to that empire.

During the period of nearly five centuries in which Britain had been held by Rome, some traffic had existed between the two countries; and even before the Roman invasion the produce of Great Britain was not unknown in the great empires of the East. But the narrow spirit of commercial jealousy, that so often attends the earliest projects of mercantile adventure, has materially circumscribed our information on this head. The Phœnicians, the earliest traders with Britain, endeavoured to conceal from the rest of the world, not only the situation of the British islands, but even the route by which they had traded with them: so carefully was this kept from their neighbours, that to this day it is a subject of discussion among the antiquaries, whether their intercourse was direct by sea, that is, by coasting round the southern peninsula of Europe; or indirectly, through Gaul, by the Rhone, the the Garonne, and the Loire.

The Latin writers have, however, given ample details of the commerce carried on between that Empire and Britain. The principal articles of importation into Rome appear to have been Earth, Metals, Horses, Dogs, Pearls, Ivory, Slaves, and Wickerwork.

Lime and Chalk are known to have been exported at a very early period. From the following inscription on a votive altar recently found in Zealand, it may be inferred they were then considered of more importance than at present;

To  
The Goddess *Nehalennia*,  
for his goods well preserved,  
*Secundus Silvanus*,  
a Chalk merchant of  
Britain,  
willingly performs his merited vows.

Tin was evidently one of the most valuable articles found in Britain, and from the testimony of all writers, both sacred and profane, it was much sought after. The precise purposes to which it was applied are not, however, well known. The coating of copper vessels is supposed to have been a principal one. In the fourth volume of Dr. Watson's Chemical Essays, the learned author considers the Phœnicians used a solution of Tin in nitro-muriatic acid, to fix the colours of the Tyrian or purple dye, for which they were so famous.

Lead, which is now so important an article of commerce, was formerly found only in Gaul and Spain; the discovery of the lead mines, in England and Wales, was the source of much satisfaction to the Romans. Pliny remarks, "it may even be produced in greater quantities in Britain." So little Iron was raised that Cæsar distinctly states, "the produce is barely sufficient for their [the Britons] own consumption."

British Pearls had been so famous, even before the Roman invasion, that Suetonius admits one of his motives for subduing the country was the pearl fishery in the Conway. It is also certain that after the return of Julius Cæsar he dedicated a breast-plate, of great value and of exquisite workmanship, to Venus Genetrix; this he placed in her temple, and from the inscription it would appear to have been made of British pearls.

That which several Roman writers have described as Ivory was most probably only the bones of some fishes unknown in the Mediterranean sea.

History has not recorded what those unfortunate Britons were who were bought and sold as Slaves, but it is known that they were employed in the most servile and laborious offices about the imperial court and the theatres. It is presumed they were either prisoners taken in war, or criminals doomed to expiate their crimes in bondage. Many, however, conceive them to have been gamblers, who having lost all their money and goods, staked their children, their wives, and finally themselves.

The horses of the Britons were particularly valued by the Romans, who mounted their cavalry with them. The dogs of these islands were always in request; some were absolutely trained to the purposes of war, for which they had long before been used in Gaul. Others, like our present mastiffs and bull-dogs, were used in their amphitheatres to fight their wild bulls and the other animals, that graced the Roman triumphs, as we read in Claudian:

"Magnaue taurorem fractur collo Britanni."

"And British mastiffs break the necks of mighty bulls."



But the dogs most valuable in the estimation of the Romans, were those designed for hunting, which excelled in swiftness and exquisite scent, any they possessed. Many of their writers speak in terms of the highest admiration of the English dogs :

There is a kind of dog of mighty fame  
For hunting, worthy of a fairer frame ;  
By painted Britons, brave in war, they're bred,  
Are beagles called, and to the chase are led.

The only articles of export that could be fairly called manufactured were baskets and wickerwork, these were made of stained osiers, and were of elegant workmanship. Juvenal mentions them among the more expensive articles exhibited in the houses of the principal Romans. Baskets are frequently named as a luxury, and we learn from Martial that they were made in Britain :

"A basket, I, by painted Britons wrought,  
Have now to Rome's imperial city brought."

The articles of import and consumption by the Britons are fully described by Cæsar,\* and by Strabo ;† they principally consisted of Brass wares, Bridles, Chains, Cups of Amber, drinking Glasses, and various articles and trinkets of the same description.

For a considerable period after the withdrawal of the Romans a great blank occurs in every well authenticated history of Britain. The Roman historians are numerous ; every occurrence from the invasion by Cæsar to the middle of the fifth century is distinctly detailed, with the accuracy that distinguishes the works of Cæsar, Tacitus, Pliny, and Strabo. The writers of Gaul, under Roman dominion, were at least respectable ; those of Spain the most famous of the age ; but Roman Britain did not produce one single literary name. Gildas was the first British author ; he lived in 540, and so surprizing were his acquirements then considered that they obtained for him the name of Sapiens.‡ And even Gildas admits that what he wrote was either from

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\* Lib. v. c. 12.

† Lib. iv.

‡ The works of Gildas, which have been reprinted, abound with chronological errors. The letter to Ætius is thought by many to have been the production of this eloquent declaimer. He died at the age of ninety, and was buried in the celebrated monastery of Bangor, near Chester. Nennius, who lived shortly after Gildas, mentions some few facts, but they form no connected history. The little that is now known of this period is gathered from the poems and traditions of the bards.

tradition or drawn from statements he had derived from foreign parts. No records then existed; they had been either destroyed by the Romans or carried away by the natives. It is therefore quite impossible, were it indeed requisite here, to enter minutely into details of the aboriginal tribes, after the evacuation of the country by the Roman troops.

Assailed on every side, the Britons called to their assistance auxiliaries, who soon became more formidable to them than the enemies they were engaged to encounter. They applied to the Saxons, then the most powerful of the northern tribes, men whose courage and ferocity had rendered them the terror of surrounding nations. The refinements of civilized life were unknown to them; even agriculture was disregarded among them. War alone was their avocation and delight.

The Britons were reduced to the greatest distress, by an invasion of a large body of the Scots and the Picts, at a time when two Saxon chieftains, Hengist and Horsa, having with them three *chiules*, or war ships, accidentally landed on their shores. Guorteyrn, or as he is more usually called, Vortigern, the British chief, immediately made overtures to them for assistance, promising, in return for their services, the isle of Thanet. An agreement having been made, and seventeen vessels having arrived with troops, the warlike brothers led them against the enemy, and under the standard of the White Horse,\* they were everywhere successful. Their exploits excited the greatest joy in Britain. "After overthrowing our enemies," says an ancient poet,† "they joined with us in the rejoicings of victory, and we rivalled one another in giving them welcome. But woe to the day when we loved them! woe to Guorteyrn and his cowardly advisers!"

Perceiving how easily the subjugation of the Britons could be effected, the Saxons demanded more land and additional subsidies. The representations they made to their countrymen of their great success, and of the riches and fertility of Britain, induced large bodies of them to abandon their native country and join their comrades in Britain. At length the mask of friendship was thrown aside, an alliance was formed

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\* This "*dewyse*," one of the first noted in English history, was adopted by the Saxon brothers from their own names, both of which signify a horse. A White Horse is still the Arms of the county of Kent, and also of the kingdom of Hanover.

† *Arymes Prydain Vawr*, a national song of the Britons; see *Cambrian Register*, 1796, page 554. According to ancient traditions this island was once called *Prydain*.

between the Picts and the Saxons, and a war of extermination commenced against the unfortunate Britons. The earliest conquests of the Saxons\* were confined to the coast of Kent, but they rapidly extended to the shores of Sussex, Hampshire, and Dorsetshire, and from thence they penetrated into the central part of the island. In the north-eastern parts the Picts were equally successful.

As the Saxon tribes successively established themselves in various districts of Britain, they formed independent lordships, or principalities; some of the chieftains who obtained possession of these small territories, dignified themselves with the appellation of Kings.†

These petty monarchs were engaged in incessant warfare with each other. The ties of kindred were disregarded. The German invaders spilt their kindred blood as freely as that of the native Britons. Sir James Mackintosh has well observed, "the events of this distressing period scarcely deserve to be known, and there are few means of ascertaining them. The uniform succession of acts of cruelty and treachery ceases to interest human feelings. It wears out not only our compassion but our indignation. As the sufferer would be a tyrant if he could, it becomes difficult either to pity him, or to blame the oppressor, as much as in better times nature would dictate, and morality require." The county of Chester was one of the last parts of the country that was subdued by the Saxons. Its conquest was not finally accomplished until 585, when it was placed in the kingdom of Mercia, which by the union of several minor lordships at that time became the most extensive in the island. All the smaller estates of the Saxons ultimately merged into seven nations, distinguished in history as the Heptarchy.

Gildas after lamenting the devastation caused by this series of contests, remarks, "that there was still left in Britain twenty eight cities and several well fortified castles." How great must have been the destruction that reduced them to so small a number! Indeed it is recorded that when in 596 Augustine landed in Kent, to carry

\* It is not correct to call them Saxons, for strictly speaking they were Jutes, inhabitants of Jutland. They were, with many other tribes, living to the northward of the Elbe, called Saxons, or short-swordsmen, from *sax*, *seax*, *sæx*, and *saks*, a short sword or a crooked sword, their favourite weapon.

† The words *Koning*, *Kyning*, *King*, *Kong*, *Koenig*, and several nearly similar in the Teutonic Languages, are used to denote every sort of command from the highest to a very narrow extent. In a Frank version of the New Testament even Cornelius, the pious centurion, is styled *Koning*. It would be incorrect to understand these words, and also Earl or Count, in their modern sense when we meet them in Anglo-Saxon history.

into effect the pious intentions of Pope Gregory the Great, he found that both the Christian religion and the British language were extinct in the Saxon territories. And with little intermission, these contests among the Saxon princes continued until Egbert united the Heptarchy into one kingdom.

He is generally represented as having commanded in a council of the nations held at Winchester, where he was crowned in 823, that his dominions should thenceforth be called England ;\* but there is not the slightest authority in the works of any writers anterior to the Norman conquest, to warrant this statement. On the contrary, it appears from existing monastic charters, that *King of the West Saxons* was the title borne not only by Egbert, but by his son and four grandsons. Even the great Alfred, the last of these Kings, is called by Asser, his biographer and tutor, "*Rex occidentalium Saxonum*."

Egbert,† whose merits deserved dominion, and whose prudence secured success, first divided the kingdom into counties, and made various salutary enactments. But England under her new monarch, was only enabled to enjoy peace for a very few years. She had scarcely made any approach to regular government when a new race of barbarians, fiercer than any of her former oppressors, appeared on her coasts. These were the Scandinavians, better known in English history as the Danes. From their first landing in 794, they continued their ravages with increasing numbers and unceasing ferocity, until the entire kingdom was reduced to a state of most distressing bondage. The Danes had scarcely any natural inducement to spare a country wherein they did not hope to dwell, and which they visited only to plunder. They were less liable to retaliation than any other tribes, for it was their boast to have neither kindred, family, or home. Piracy was their trade ; in it they gloried. They were perhaps the only barbarians who applied the highest title of Magistracy to the leaders of their pirate fleets, whom they named *Vikings*, or Sea Kings. With them, tears,

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\* See the Monast. Anglic. and other authorities quoted by Rapin in his England, fol. ed. l. p. 338 And in reply, Asserii Annales, script. ed. Gale, 165—172. Asser, a native of Meneva or St. David's, was appointed by Alfred, Bishop of Sherburne.

† He had long lived at the court of Charlemagne, and had acquired great authority over his contemporary princes, though only assuming the title of King of Wessex. He was the lineal descendant of Cedric the founder of that Kingdom, the most powerful of the Saxon chiefs, whose authority was enhanced by claiming to be ranked as the direct progeny of Oden, the deified hero of the Nordsinen. Egbert was the common ancestor of all the dynasties that have since permanently occupied the throne of England.

regarded by all others as the badge of humanity, were forsworn as a disgrace. In their first incursions they are mentioned by the Saxon Chroniclers as "Heathens," a description which probably more than any other, faithfully portrayed the deep horror they excited. Rich monasteries, in which treasures had been accumulated, were the most attractive objects of their plunder: even the convents were the scene of those unspeakable indignities and abominations which may be imagined to flow from the excitement of all the evil passions of ferocious savages. During the reign of several of Egbert's successors, English history is little more than an account of the devastations they committed, until the country was entirely subdued, the lands lying uncultivated, and most of the monasteries and churches destroyed.

To obtain temporary respite on various occasions, the Saxons gave to the Danes large sums of money, but they only acted as incentives to further aggressions and atrocities. Villages were laid in ruins; almost all the monuments of Roman art and industry were destroyed, and many of the most skilful of the native artisans, finding neither employment or security at home, fled to the continent.

"All," say the Saxon Chronicles of 876, "were subjugated except Alfred the King," a prince who seemed born not only to defend his suffering country, but even to adorn humanity. Retiring with a few of the Saxon nobles into the marshes and forests of Somersetshire, he made frequent irruptions from thence upon straggling parties of the Danes. Taking advantage of their disorder and inattention, at length he burst from his fastness, in the Isle of Athelney,\* and was received by his oppressed people with an enthusiasm that was increased by the mystery of his retreat and his return. He defeated the Danes, and compelled them to evacuate Wessex. To such of them as chose to embrace Christianity he gave a large portion of Lincolnshire. Godrun the Danish King, and many of his pagan nobles availed themselves of this offer, and swore by a bracelet consecrated to their own gods, that they would faithfully receive baptism.†

The memory of Alfred has long been revered; even the Norman historians speak of him as the glory of the land that had become their own. There is no subject on which unanimous tradition is so nearly sufficient evidence, as the eminence of one man over

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\* Literally, "the Isle of the Nobles," from the Saxon chieftains having assembled there.

† *On þam halgan beage.* Saxon Chron. edit. Gibbon, 83.

others of the same condition. Although it be an infirmity in all nations to ascribe their institutions to the contrivance of some favourite monarch or statesman, rather than to the slow action of time and circumstances, yet the selection of Alfred by the English people, as founder of all that is dear to them, is surely the strongest proof of the deep impression which his transcendent wisdom and virtue have left upon the minds of all:—juries, the division of the island into counties and hundreds, the device of frankpledge, the formation of the common or customary law itself,—these could not have been mistakenly applied to him by anything less than general reverence.

Alfred settled the boundaries of most of the parishes, hundreds, and counties, into which England is still divided; and a survey of the whole having been made, he ordered it to be recorded in what is termed the Book of Winchester, which is the foundation of the Domesday Book, compiled two centuries afterwards by William the Conqueror.

Cheshire was then considered to include the lands in Lancashire between the Mersey and the Ribble. It was placed in the ~~Mercen~~ *Mercen* *Leg*, or Mercian Jurisdiction. Aware of the great importance of defending this part of his dominions from the attacks of the Britons who remained unconquered in Wales, Alfred committed the government of Cheshire to certain Earls especially entrusted with unlimited control over the County.

The period of a century and a half which elapsed between the death of Alfred and the Norman conquest, is distinguished by little except the rise and progress of ecclesiastical power in spite of divisions among the clergy, the struggles of the Scandinavians who had colonized the northern and eastern counties, and the increasing connection and intercourse with Normandy, which gradually prepared the Anglo-Saxons for a change of dynasty.

The most remarkable personage of the times was Ethelfleda, the undegenerate daughter of the great Alfred. She married Ethelred, who is denominated by Higden the Monk of Chester, and by Matthew of Westminster, *Dux et Subregulus Merciorum*, being the first Governor of Mercia appointed by Alfred. Having separated from her husband immediately after the birth of her first child, they continued united in all acts of munificence and piety, restoring cities, founding abbeys, and removing to more suitable places the bones of departed saints. For many years after the death of Ethelred she governed the entire province of Mercia, except Oxford, with a character distinguished for valour and for wisdom. The "*Ladye of Mercia*," as she is termed

by the Saxon Chroniclers, is the most celebrated female in their records. She became so renowned that the effeminate titles of Lady or Queen were deemed unworthy of her, and she received those of Lord and King. Her praises formed the theme of many ancient poems, a portion of one of which, by Henry Huntingdon, is as follows :—

O, ELFLADA potens, O terror virgo virorum,  
 Virtrix naturæ nomine digna viri!  
 Tu quo splendidior, fieres natura puellam,  
 Te probitas fecit nomen habere viri:  
 Te mutare decet, sed solum nomine Sexus.  
 Tu Regina potens Rexque trophæa parans:  
 Nec jam Cæsarei tantum meruere triumph;  
 Cæsare splendidior virgo, virago, bale.

The heroine appears to have well merited this eulogium. She erected castles at Tamworth, Warwick, Stafford, Runcorn, and five other places. On several occasions she repulsed the Welsh and the Danes. Death put an end to her distinguished life in the summer of 919\* at Tamworth, whence her body was removed to Gloucester. Her loss was regretted by the whole kingdom, and by none more sensibly than her brother Edward, for she was as useful to that wise prince in the cabinet as in the field.

Though frequently opposed, and sometimes defeated, fresh reinforcements of Danes continued to arrive, and they gradually advanced in their progress of conquest. Neither successive donations of money, which under the denomination of *Danegelt*, in one year amounted to the then prodigious sum of forty eight thousand pounds, nor the cession of sixteen counties, could procure any abatement of their hostility. In a sermon yet extant, by Lupas a Saxon bishop, the following affecting description of their sufferings occurs. "Such is their valour that one of them will put ten of us to flight; two or three of them will drive a troop of captive Christians from sea to sea. They seize the wives and daughters of our thanes, and violate them before our chieftains' faces.

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\* The 12th of June, 919, according to Florentius, Henry Hunting. Mat. West. and the Polychron.; but Hoveden and Eltheward, iv. 4. say 915; Pennant, 922. The Latin verses have often been translated, probably that made for Mr. Pennant, by the late Rev. Richard Williams, is the best:

Elfreda, terror of mankind!  
 Nature, for ever unconfined,  
 Stamp't thee in woman's tender frame,  
 Though worthy of a hero's name:

Thee, thee alone the muse shall sing,  
 Dread EMPRESS and victorious KING!  
 E'en Cæsar's conquests were outdone  
 By thee, illustrious Amazon.

The slave of yesterday becomes the master of his lord to-day. Soldiers, famine, flames, and blood, surround us. The poor are sold far out of their lands, for foreign slavery; even our children in the cradle are sold for slaves."

At length, in 1016, a treaty took place between Edmund, surnamed Ironsides, king of the Saxons, and Canute, king of the Danes, by which a partition of the kingdom was made, and the northern part allotted to the Danish monarch. A very few months afterwards Edmund was murdered by his chamberlains,\* and Canute took possession of the entire kingdom, being the first Danish monarch that ruled in England.

It was after one of the many battles fought between the rival forces, that a Danish chief having been defeated, and flying for his life, struck into a wood on the borders of Warwickshire, with the paths of which he was unacquainted. Having walked all night endeavouring to extricate himself, in the morning he met a Saxon peasant boy, whom he entreated to show him the nearest way to the Severn, where some Danish vessels were lying. The lad took him to his father's house where they passed the day, and at night they departed for the Danish camp. The peasant knowing there would be no safety for the boy on his return, should it be known that he had protected the Dane, made the latter promise he would exert himself with the king to take his son into his service. 'The chief kept his word.' On their arrival at the camp, he took the young peasant to his tent and treated him in every respect as his own child.† He soon afterwards obtained from Canute a military situation for him, and at length the Saxon peasant rose to the rank of governor of a province. This was Godwin the son of Elfnoth. From the keeper of a Saxon flock he arrived at the highest dignities of the country, under its Danish monarchs; and was yet reserved, by a most extraordinary destiny, to contribute, far beyond all others, to the overthrow of their power.

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\* The following extracts will show the different manner in which this transaction is mentioned by ancient writers. "Edric most perfidiously caused his sons to murder King Edmund, by using a sharp knife for that purpose, at Oxford, on the last of November, 1016," says Matthew Paris, page 401. But William of Malmesbury, 72, says, "Edric corrupted two of the King's bedchamberlains to murder him with an iron hook." And Florentius and Hoveden both state, King Edmund died at London, about the feast of St. Andrew the Apostle. There are most minute details among the ancient historians, of Edric being afterwards decapitated, and his head placed on the Tower of London, by order of Canute, for his treasons, Canute having told him he would make him "higher than all the noblemen in England." But there are others equally minute of the manner in which he was privately strangled, and his body thrown into the Thames, for fear of a tumult on the part of the populace, by whom he was much beloved.

† Torfæi. Hist. rer. Norveg. pars. iii. lib. i. cap. 21, p. 236, et seq.



After gaining several victories over the Norwegians, the earldom of Wessex, a district that had been rendered into the form of a province, was conferred upon Godwin, and he was subsequently invested with great power and vast estates.

The Danish dynasty was of short duration; Canute was succeeded by his sons Harold I. and Hardicanute. Upon the death of the latter, at a marriage feast in 1041, before the Danes could assemble for the election of a new monarch, an insurrectional army was formed under a chief named Hown. Unfortunately the exploits of this army are as unknown as the name of its leaders are obscure, but Godwin and his son Harold raised the standard of pure independence for their own country, against every Dane, king or pretender, chief or soldier.

They were everywhere successful; the Danes, driven northward from town to town, were glad to escape to their shipping, and return to their own country. "The entire guidance of public affairs," says William of Malmesbury, "was confided to the son of Ulfnoth the herdsman, who by rescuing his country from the hands of the foreigners accomplished the singular fortune which he commenced by saving a foreigner and an enemy from the hands of his countrymen." Had Godwin then been desirous of assuming the royal dignity, he could have caused himself to be appointed king; but pursuant to his advice, at a council held at Gillingham, it was determined that Edward (the son of Ethelred the second) who had long been an exile in Normandy, should be invited to the crown, on condition of his bringing but a very limited number of Normans with him. Edward accordingly arrived in England, and was crowned at Winchester in 1042. Soon afterwards he married the daughter of the powerful earl Godwin; and the English, who had been long oppressed by a foreign yoke, were delighted at the restoration of the line of their ancient monarchs, and for many years there was every outward appearance of prosperity. But the germs of fresh troubles were silently developing themselves. Edward was the son of a Norman princess, and having from his infancy been brought up in Normandy, he evinced in every instance a predilection for the laws and customs of that country. According to the stipulations of the Anglo-Saxon chiefs, he had sworn to bring with him only a small number of Normans; and though he did bring but few, many followed him, and all were gladly welcomed at his court. He could not refrain from preferring them to the Saxon nobles, who were previously unknown to him, although he was indebted to them for his regal honours. The fortresses of England were intrusted to Norman commanders; Norman

priests obtained English bishoprics, and became the chaplains, councillors, and confidants of the king. No one that solicited him in his native tongue met with a refusal ; while all the customs of the Anglo-Saxons, even in the most indifferent things, were abandoned to the lowest order.\* But the people, who had shed their blood so freely that England should be emancipated from foreign thralldom, were little pleased at the grace and elegance of the Norman fashions, so generally adopted at the court of the Confessor ; they imagined they beheld the government by foreigners revived under a mere change of name.

Godwin, now the most exalted of his own countrymen, and first in dignity after the king, had not forgotten his Saxon and plebian origin. He joined the popular party against the foreign favourites. The whole extent of the country south of the Thames was under his government, and an unexpected event led him to call his powers into requisition at an earlier period than he had anticipated.

Some disturbance arose at Dover, where Eustace, count of Boulogne, a brother-in-law of Edward, had arrived from France with a numerous train of attendants, The king immediately sent to earl Godwin, in whose government Dover was situated, directing him to go and punish, by military execution, all who had offended his relatives ; the earl refused. William of Malmesbury distinctly states that he said to the king, "it is not fit you should condemn without hearing, men whom it is your duty to protect." Edward's fury, excited by his foreign favourites, was now directed solely against Godwin, who being charged with disobedience and rebellion was summoned to attend at Gloucester ; finding that sentence of banishment was about to be passed upon him, Godwin resolved to appeal to the people, against the machinations of the Norman courtiers. He raised a large body of troops in his own counties. Harold his eldest son mustered the forces of the eastern coasts, while the inhabitants of the banks of the Severn and the Welsh frontiers joined under his second son Sweyn. To oppose them, Edward ordered Siward earl of Northumberland, and Leofric earl of Chester, or rather of all Mercia, to advance ; but the aversion of the Anglo-Saxons to oppose their countrymen obliged the Confessor to submit to a reconciliation, at which much was promised, though little was performed, for very shortly afterwards he ordered the possessions of Godwin and his sons to be

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\* *Propriam consuetudinem in his et in aliis multis erubescere.* (Hist. Ingulph. Croyland, vol. 1, 62, ed. Gale.)

seized and confiscated. The king's wife, was stripped of all her lands, furniture, and money. "It is not fit," said the foreign courtiers, "that at a time when the family of this woman are suffering banishment, she herself should sleep on down."\* The weak Edward even went so far as to imprison her in a convent.

In 1051, another and more important visitor than any that had yet appeared at the court of Edward the Confessor arrived; this was William, duke of Normandy. In his journey through England he might have believed he was in his own territories. The fleet he found at Dover was commanded by Normans; the garrison of Canterbury was composed of Norman soldiers; the favourites, the courtiers of Edward, came to pay their respects to the Duke in his national attire, and speaking the language of his country. He appeared more the sovereign of England than Edward himself, and it was not long before he conceived the project of becoming its king on the death of Edward, then, with nearly all his court, so much the slave of Norman influence.

In the summer of the following year Godwin returned to England with a large force, and after some negotiation with Edward the members of this popular family were again reinstated in their honours and possessions. The Queen, Godwin's daughter, left the cloister and returned to the palace of the Confessor. Godwin remained in the enjoyment of his estates until his death, in 1053, when he was succeeded by his son Harold, who continued to pay to Edward that respectful homage of which the Confessor was at all times so jealous. Harold was unquestionably the first among his countrymen in authority and military talent. All his ingenuity and powers of intrigue were devoted to one object, his succession to the crown on the demise of Edward. Towards the latter part of the year 1065, Harold asked the king's permission to bring home his brother and nephew, who were held in a sort of captivity as hostages by the duke of Normandy, to whose custody they had been committed by Edward. The king appearing reluctant to Harold's departure, he set out as if on a journey of pleasure; but driven out of his course, he was shipwrecked in the territories of the Count de Ponthieu. It was the barbarous practice of that period, instead of administering assistance to any person that might be cast upon the shore by storm, to imprison them and keep them until they were enabled to procure their freedom, by way of ransom. Harold was thus detained by the lord of Ponthieu, who

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\* Ne scilicet omnibus suis parentibus patriam suspirantibus sola sterteret in pluma. Wm. Malms. Lib. 11. p. 82.

obtained the price he had fixed for his ransom from William, to whose court at Rouen Harold repaired after his release. The duke received him with the utmost apparent frankness and cordiality, making him presents, and conferring upon him the honour of the high Norman military order of Knighthood.

During his stay at Rouen, upon one occasion when riding with William, the duke abruptly mentioned his wish to be king of England, and asked for Harold's assistance. Surprized at this unexpected disclosure; he answered by some vague promise of adhesion, when William proceeded to define the manner in which he was to assist him. Harold perceiving the danger into which he had drawn his two relatives, the hostages, complied with the duke's demands; and he who had twice taken up arms to drive away the foreigners from his country, then promised to deliver up to a foreigner and an enemy the principal fortress in the same country, and otherwise aid him in his attempts at its conquest.\*

In the town of Avranches, or that of Bayeux, (for testimonies vary as to place,) William convoked a great council of the Lords and Barons of Normandy. The day before that for which the assembly was summoned, William "caused the bones and other relics of the most revered saints and martyrs, to be brought from all the churches and monasteries in the neighbourhood, in quantity sufficient to fill a great chest, and placed them in the hall of council, covered with a cloth of gold." When the duke had taken his seat on the throne, holding a drawn sword in his hand, and surrounded by a crowd of Norman nobles, two little caskets of relics were laid before him. William then turning to the Saxon earl by whom he was accompanied, said, "Harold, I require thee, before this noble assembly, to confirm by thy oath the promises thou hast made to me, that thou wilt fortify and give to me the castle of Dover, and assist me in obtaining the kingdom of England at Edward's death; that thou wilt marry my daughter Adela, and send me thy sister that I may give her to one of my knights." Again taken by surprize, and fearing to deny his own verbal promise, Harold approached the reliquaries with a troubled air, and laying his hands upon them swore, if he lived, to perform to the utmost of his power, his agreement with the duke. The attesting nobles of Normandy repeated "~~May God be thy help.~~" William then made a signal, upon which the golden cloth that covered the altar was removed, discovering to

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\* Eadmer. Hist. nov. (ed. Selden,) lib. 1, p. 5.

Harold the bones and skeletons, the canonized fragments upon which he had sworn. The Norman historians add, that Harold shuddered, and his countenance changed at the sight of this enormous heap. William then admonished him religiously to observe the engagement which had been ratified by so tremendous a sanction. Harold left soon afterward, William accompanying him to the sea shore, making him further presents, and dismissing him with every mark of esteem and confidence; but rejoicing that he had obtained from the man in all England most capable of frustrating his projects, a public and solemn oath to serve and assist him.

Immediately after Harold's arrival in England, he was called upon to repress an insurrection of the Northumbrians, who had rebelled against Tostig his own brother, then governor of that province. The Northumbrians were assisted by the two most powerful barons of the day, Morcar and Edwin, sons of Algar earl of Chester. Edward's orders to Harold were to reinstate Tostig in the government. But by Harold's intrigue Morcar was confirmed in the earldom of Northumberland,\* and Tostig retired in disgust to Bruges, the usual asylum of the expatriated barons of England. More firmly to cement his friendship with Edwin and Morcar, Harold married Alghitha their sister, widow of Griffith king of North Wales, notwithstanding the promise he had made William of Normandy. Harold was at this time, beyond all doubt, the most powerful baron in England. By the death of his father, earl Godwin, once the shepherd boy, he had succeeded to the counties of Kent, Essex, Sussex, and other immense possessions; and while he himself possessed the jurisdiction of the south, Morcar had that of the north, and Edwin commanded the vast province of Mercia. All England was, in fact, engaged in his interest, and dissimulation being no longer requisite, he openly avowed his intention to claim the crown on the death of Edward, an event then daily expected.

The friends of Harold assert, that before Edward expired, the earl and several of

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\* Some historians represent this in a more favourable light. They assume that Harold sacrificed his affection for his brother to his duty to the king; that disapproving the conduct of Tostig, he disobeyed the orders of Edward to reinstate him, and procured the appointment of Morcar, because it would be more advantageous to the country. But his intimate alliance with the two barons, and his marriage to their sister so shortly after the murder of her husband, would lead to the opinion that it was done for the advancement of his own interests; which is somewhat confirmed by "the bitter spirit of rivalry that is known to have subsisted between the two brothers from their earliest youth, nay even from their babyhood."—Palgrave, *Ang. Sax. cap. 15.*

his kinsmen forced their way into the chamber of the dying monarch, and urged him to name his successor. "You know my lords," said Edward, "that I have bequeathed my kingdom to the duke of Normandy, and are there not those here whose oaths have been given to promote that succession?" Continuing his importunities he at length gained a reluctant consent: "Harold take it, if such be thy wish, but the gift will be thy ruin. Against the duke and his barons no powers can avail thee." Exhausted with fatigue, the king turned round on his couch and faintly intimated, that the English people might name Harold or whom they pleased as king, and immediately afterwards he breathed his last, on the 4th January, 1066. On the following day Edward was buried in the magnificent abbey of St. Peter, at Westminster, of which he was the founder, and which, anticipating the near approach of death, he had caused to be consecrated only two days before. Delay or hesitation would have been fatal to the cause of Harold, then *under-king of Kent*.<sup>\*</sup> He was proclaimed King of England on the evening of Edward's decease; and the ministers of religion proceeded from the interment of the one monarch to the coronation of the other on the morning of the following day, in the presence of all the Anglo-Saxon chieftains near to London, by whose suffrages he was confirmed in the regal dignity.

Neither William or Harold had any claim to the English crown that would in the least accord with the modern rules of hereditary descent. There is perhaps no great event in the annals of England in which it is more difficult to elicit truth. William as the grand-nephew of the mother of Edward was so far related to, or rather connected with him, as to make it easy for the feelings of the people to familiarize such a consanguinity with the right to inheritance. Harold gladly availed himself of the fact of his sister being the wife of Edward, to amuse the minds of the Saxons with a still more faint semblance of a right. It is almost impossible to reconcile their rival pretensions, which, whatever doubt may exist as to the contradictory bequests of the Confessor, were both founded upon acts emanating from his weak and wavering mind. In the war of argument William had one vast advantage over his competitor. Harold had sworn to assist him in obtaining the kingdom, and when the son of Godwin assumed the sceptre himself, he at once violated his solemn abjuration as a christian, and his plighted faith as a man and a soldier. †

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<sup>\*</sup> Sub regulus Haroldus. Sim. Dunelm.

† Turner's Ang. Sax. Hist. iii. p. 339. Mackintosh's Eng. cap. 3, p. 94.

The commencement of Harold's short reign was marked by a return to the national usages of the Saxons, and those forms and manners which had been discountenanced by his predecessor, were again adopted at his court.

A sort of respect to Edward's old affections induced Harold to continue some Normans in possession of their lands, and in several instances of the offices they had held under the Confessor; but instead of being grateful for this indulgence, they used every effort secretly to promote the objects of the duke of Normandy, who first heard from them of Edward's death, and the election of his successor. Upon receiving this intelligence William instantly avowed his intention to obtain the kingdom by force of arms. To give the better colour to his proceedings, he previously dispatched an herald to Harold. The old chroniclers state the precise language of the embassy to have been, "William, duke of the Normans, sends to remind thee of the oath which thou hast sworn to him with thy mouth, and with thy hand upon good and holy relics."\*

"It is true," replied the Saxon king, who was then in the southern part of the kingdom, "that I took an oath to William, but I took it under constraint; my royal authority is not my own; I could not lay it down against the will of the country, nor can I against the will of the country take a foreign wife. As for my sister whom the duke claims, that he may marry her to one of his chiefs, she has died within the year: would he have me send her corpse?"

When William was made acquainted with this answer, he again sent to Harold with reproaches, expressed in mild and moderate terms,† and entreating that if he would not consent to fulfil all the conditions to which he had sworn, that he would at least perform one of them, and receive the young princess whom he had promised to make his wife. Harold replied he would not, nor could he receive her, for he had married a Saxon woman, the sister of Morcar and Edwin, and that if any attempts were made upon his dominions by violence, the invader should experience the power of a united nation, conducted by a monarch resolved to lose his government only with his life. The message was exactly such as William had anticipated. The embassies were

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\* Sur bons saintuaries. Chron. de Norman, xiii. 229. "Myd hys ryghte honde," Robt. Glost. chron. 358, edit. Hearne; and "Et lingua et manu." Guil. Pictav. 192.

† Sterum ei amica familiaritate mandavit. Eadmer. Hist. lib. 1, page 5.

indeed but an unnecessary display of form ; for both parties had before determined to appeal to the sword, and the English, no less than the Normans, were astonished at the mighty preparations making to win the splendid prize.

The intentions of William were made known throughout the continent of Europe, and adventurers from every quarter were invited to share the honour, the danger, and the profit of this expedition. Hosts of warriors, and abundance of supplies, came from all parts. The courts of Brittany and Anjou zealously supported the cause of William, and every inducement was offered to their subjects to join his standard.

Henry IV, then emperor of Germany, not only gave his vassals permission to embark, but guaranteed the safety of Normandy during the absence of the Duke. His most potent ally, however, was the Pope, Alexander II., whose immense influence over the minds of the ancient barons was exerted in favour of William. He hoped the success of the Norman arms would bring the English churches into a closer conformity with those of the continent, and impose upon England a more devoted reverence to the see of Rome.\* To further this intention and at the same time to strengthen the faith and courage of the Normans, Alexander sent the Duke a consecrated banner—the glenfanon of St. Peter, and a precious ring, in which was a hair of that venerated apostle. Thus the ambition which instigated this martial enterprise, and all the violence which accompanied it, was covered with the broad mantle of religion. The holy standard that was to confer this sacred character on the invasion of England, was the same which, but a few years before, had been planted by the Norman barons of Montreuil, in the name of the Church, on the towers of Campagna.

The only obstacle of importance that William encountered was among his own subjects, for he could not command them to cross the sea, as their tenures did not bind them to such a service. The Norman barons were at first much divided in their opinions as to the propriety of his projects. They were reluctant either to grant the exorbitant sums requisite for the equipment of the expedition, or to set the example of serving their chief at a distance from their own country. In a council held at Lislebonne, “such was the storm of opposition, that it seemed as if the very roof of the hall would be rent asunder.” William, unable to restore order, withdrew to

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\* The constant object of the celebrated Hildebrand, afterwards Gregory VII., who then ruled the Vatican, an object in furtherance of which he displayed the most indefatigable ability, and employed all the resources of a powerful genius, was to transform the religious supremacy of the holy see into universal sovereignty over all christian states.



another apartment, and calling to him the chiefs separately, he argued with them individually, declaring the present undertaking should not in future be considered a precedent, and that the fertile lands of England should reward their loyalty and generosity to him. He promised favours to all according to the extent of their services, and his ability to reward them. For a ship and twenty men at arms furnished by one Remi, of Fescamps, the reward was to be an English bishopric.

The prospect of remuneration assuaged the tempest.\* The Barons having assented, and sworn to assist the Duke to the utmost of their power, the Norman states now vied with each other in supplying men, horses, and provisions. Every vessel was put in requisition; and many private individuals sought the favour of the Duke, by building ships at their own expense. All that were adventurers by profession, all the outcasts of western Europe, were found under the standard of William, whose proclamation of war was published in every part of the continent. Some of his followers stipulated for pay in money; others only for their passage and the booty they could make; many agreed, for land among the English, a demesne, a castle, or a town; while with others a rich Saxon woman would suffice.

At length in August, the powerful armament of William was assembled. It amounted, according to the Saxon writers, to about 60,000 troops, with 3000 ships; but this is supposed to be greatly exaggerated. The chronicles of Normandy speak of only 900 large ships; and, in another place, of "400 ships with large masts and sails, and a thousand transport boats."

The departure of the Norman forces was delayed by several occurrences. For upwards of a month the vessels were detained by contrary winds; and when at last they got to sea, several were lost in a violent storm which obliged the fleet to put back. This disaster was severely felt by William, his barons evincing much dissatisfaction, some of them breaking their engagement with him, and withdrawing from the hazardous enterprize.

To exhilarate the drooping spirits of the soldiers, abundance of money, provisions, and liquors, were distributed among them. Above all, a successful appeal was made

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\* "No one had courage, thus singly interrogated in this interview with the Duke, to pronounce a refusal to the chief of their Country face to face; what they granted was immediately registered, and the example of the first determined him that came after. One subscribed for Vessels, another for Men at arms, many promised to attend in person. Priests gave their money, Merchants their stuffs, and the Country People their provisions." See Chron. de Normandie. tom. xiii. 226, 227.

to their superstition. William of Poitiers, chaplain to the Conqueror, a most trustworthy and competent witness, who appears to have recorded everything connected with the conquest with that notarial precision for which Normandy was so celebrated, says, "To interest Heaven in their behalf, in the hope of obtaining a prosperous navigation, the body of St. Valery was carried in procession, the whole army joining in their devout supplications for a favourable breeze. At last their hopes were gratified: on the same evening, the eve of St. Michael, the patron saint of Normandy, the current of the atmosphere, from whatever cause, altered to the direction they wished. They instantly departed for the opposite coast."\* So unequal was the speed, that on reaching the English shore the fleet was scattered over a line of twenty leagues; and not a single vessel was discoverable from the mast-head of the Conqueror's ship when he drew near land. But he cast anchor; and, apprehensive that fear might seize the crew, ordered a sumptuous repast to be prepared for them, with spiced wines.† A second sailor mounted, and saw four ships appearing in the horizon; and the heart of the warlike Duke swelled with joy when a third seaman, after a short interval, announced the waving streamers of a sailing forest. Without any material loss, the invaders reached Pevensey, where they quietly debarked on the 28th September, 1066.

On the other hand, Harold had been equally active, in preparing to repel the threatened invasion. He had assumed the crown without waiting for the due assembly and deliberation of the states; but he had gained the consent of all the Saxon chieftains who were near to the metropolis at the death of the Confessor, and the whole nation now appeared to acquiesce in his elevation to the throne. If any were averse to his holding the reins of government, they were obliged to conceal their sentiments, and he was thus enabled to command the entire resources of the kingdom. Fully aware that the embassies of William were only to afford the Normans more time to complete their preparations, Harold was using every effort to resist him. But William was not his only opponent; for his own brother Tostig had been actively employed in Flanders, levying forces to act in conjunction with Harold of Norway, whom he had excited to invade England. The Anglo-Saxon monarch had passed the entire summer on the southern coasts, opposite the shores of Normandy, having under his command a fleet of several hundred vessels. The delay of the Norman expedition gave rise to

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\* See Guil. Pict. 199, and Chronique de Normandie, 128.

† Nec baccho pigmentato carens. Guil. Pict. 199.

an opinion it would not be ready before winter ; and so short was Harold's supply of provisions that on the 8th of September he was obliged to disperse his fleet. On that day Harold marched with his troops for York to meet the Norwegians, whose forces, united with those of Tostig, had defeated the earls Edwin and Morcar, who commanded in the north. Harold reached the neighbourhood of York on the night of the day on which that city had surrendered to the Norwegians, whose troops were to take possession of it on the following morning. The invaders were astonished at his arrival, but they were not dismayed ; instead of entering the city in triumph they boldly encountered the Saxon monarch, and an engagement took place between the hostile armies, which is considered to have been the most severe\* recorded in the annals of England. Late in the evening the battle terminated, with the death of the Norwegian monarch, of Tostig, and of every chieftain of any importance in the united army.

Two of the great antagonists of Harold had thus fallen. Had an interval elapsed sufficient to have recruited the diminished forces of Harold, before the arrival of the Norman invader, it is probable he would not have been more fortunate. But a singular fatality appears to have attended the fortunes of the Saxon monarch. Within three weeks after the fleet, that for months had been watching the preparations of his great opponent, was dispersed,—within three short days after the important defeat of the Norwegians, a period almost too limited for refreshing the wearied troops of Harold and for taking possession of the fleet and camp they had captured,—William effected an undisturbed landing in Sussex.

Harold received intelligence of this inauspicious event at a banquet in York, where he was celebrating with festive triumph the victory he had so recently obtained ; a victory which was, however, ultimately found to be more prejudicial than advantageous to his interest. He had lost in it many of his best officers and soldiers, and there is reason to believe that he subsequently offended many of his followers by his division of the plunder. It is certain that if the two powerful brothers, who ruled Mercia and Northumberland, did not literally desert his cause, they advanced so slowly towards his Norman foe that they arrived too late to join in the battle of Hastings,

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\* It is stated that the ground, fifty years after the action, which was fought on the 25th September, 1066, was whitened with the bones of the slain. Snorre, 156, 165. Chron. Sax. 172. Order. Vital. 500.

and were among the first to give in their adhesion to the Conqueror.\* Many of his veteran troops deserted him. All were averse to his encountering the Norman. His brother, the earl of Suffolk, in vain urged upon him the propriety of prolonging the war, rather than trust to the hazard of a single battle. His wife, the sister of Edwin and Morcar, abandoned him to his fate. His mother, sad, and weeping for the loss of her son Tostig, dissuaded him from meeting the forces of William; his chiefs reminded him of his oath of fealty, and that it would be perjury to fight against a prince to whom he had sworn submission and allegiance. But Harold was deaf to these considerations. Elated with his past success, he determined to meet the invader immediately, and in person. Leaving York in the first week of October, he hastened to Sussex without taking measures, or using exertion, to multiply his means of defence, attending to the suggestions of courage rather than those of prudence.

The hope of sparing his countrymen the misery of a protracted warfare, or perhaps the desire of making an unexpected attack upon the Normans, similar to that by which he had been successful against the Norwegians, determined him to meet the invader with forces vastly inferior to those which he had to encounter.

William, whose character prompted him on all occasions to leave no means unattempted, that would promote the advancement of his interests, took advantage of the unfavourable position in which he beheld his enemy, to renew his demands. He sent a monk, called Dom Hugues Maigrot, to demand from Harold that he should resign his royal dignity, and to leave to the arbitration of the Pope which should be the King, or otherwise to let that decision depend on the issue of a single combat. Harold abruptly replied, "I will not resign my title; I will not refer to the Pope; nor will I accept of single combat." Disregarding this positive refusal, William sent the Norman monk again to Harold, offering to establish him in Northumberland, and to give his brother all the lands that Godwin had held in Kent, at the same time declaring that if Harold refused these terms, then would he be excommunicated by the papal bull that William held. Maigrot delivered this in a solemn tone, and the English chieftains looked at each other, say the chroniclers of Normandy, when they heard the word excommunication, as if some great danger was impending. Yet they swore to Harold they would

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\* Sir Peter Leycester, (cap. 3, p. 101.) says, "Edwin, seventh and last Saxon earl of Chester, and his brother Morcar, stoutly opposed the Conqueror:" most other writers have followed Sir Peter, who in this instance is incorrect.

neither make peace, or truce, or treaty, with the invader ; that they would either die, or expel the Normans.

An entire day, the eighteenth after the great battle at York, was occupied with these fruitless messages. Harold's rapid march had not permitted any large bodies of troops to join him. The two great earls of the north were either at London, or on their way thither, from York. The only accession he had had was some few townspeople, armed in haste, and some monks, who deserted their cloisters at the call of their country. Among the latter were Leofric, abbot of the great monastery of Peterborough, and the abbot of Hida, near Winchester, who brought with him twelve monks of his convent and twenty armed men, raised at his own expense.\*

The great contest, which terminated the short but eventful reign of Harold, took place on the 14th of October, the anniversary of his birth-day. The following animated detail of the battle of Hastings as it is generally though improperly called, —the scene of action being Sinlac, now generally known as Battle,—is extracted from Palgrave's History of the Anglo-Saxons, and will amply repay a perusal :

"The English were strongly fortified in their position by lines of trenches and palisadoes ; and within these defences they were marshalled according to the Danish fashion, shield against shield, presenting an impenetrable front to the enemy. The men of Kent formed the vanguard, for it was their privilege to be the first in the strife. The burgesses of London, in like manner, claimed and obtained the honour of being the royal body-guard, and they were drawn up around the standard. At the foot of this banner stood Harold, with his brothers, Leofwin and Gurth, and a chosen body of the bravest thanes, all anxiously gazing on that quarter from whence they expected the advance of the enemy. Before the Normans began their march, and very early in the morning of the feast of St. Calixtus, William had assembled his barons around him, and exhorted them to maintain his righteous cause. As the invaders drew nigh, Harold saw a division advancing, composed of the volunteers from the county of Boulogne and from the Amiennois, under the command of William Fitz-Osbern and Roger Montgomery. 'It is the duke,'—exclaimed Harold—'and little shall I fear him. By *my* forces, will *his* be four times outnumbered!' Gurth shook his head, and expatiated on the strength of the Norman cavalry, as opposed to the foot soldiers

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\* De domo sua duodecim monachos, et viginti milites pro servitio. Dugdale's, Monast. Angl. vol. 1, p. 210.

of England ; but their discourse was stopped by the appearance of the combined cohorts, under Aimeric, viscount of Thouars, and Alan Fergant of Brittany. Harold's heart sunk at the sight, and he broke out into passionate exclamations of fear and dismay. But now the third and last division of the Norman army was drawing nigh. The consecrated gonfanon floats amidst the forest of spears ; and Harold is now too well aware that he beholds the ranks which are commanded in person by the duke of Normandy. As the Normans were marshalled in three divisions, so they began the battle by simultaneous attacks upon three points of the English forces. Immediately before the duke, rode Taillefer, the minstrel, singing with a loud and clear voice the lay of Charlemagne and Roland, and the emprises of the paladins who had fallen in the dolorous pass of Roncevaux. Taillefer, as his guerdon, had craved permission to strike the first blow, for he was a valiant warrior, emulating the deeds which he sung : his appellation, '*Taille-fer*,' is probably to be considered not as his real name, but as an epithet derived from his strength and prowess ; and he fully justified his demand, by transfixing the first Englishman whom he attacked, and by felling the second to the ground. The battle now became general, and raged with the greatest fury. The Normans advanced beyond the English lines, but they were driven back, and forced into a trench, where horses and riders fell upon each other in fearful confusion. More Normans were slain here than in any other part of the field. The alarm spread ; the light troops left in charge of the baggage and the stores thought that all was lost, and were about to take flight, but the fierce Odo, bishop of Bayeux, the duke's half-brother, and who was better fitted for the shield than the mitre, succeeded in reassuring them, and then, returning to the field, and rushing into that part where the battle was hottest, he fought as the stoutest of the warriors engaged in the conflict, directing their movements and inciting them to slaughter. From nine in the morning till three in the afternoon, the successes on either side were nearly balanced. The charges of the Norman cavalry gave them great advantage, but the English phalanx repelled their enemies ; and the soldiers were so well protected by their targets, that the artillery of the Normans was long discharged in vain. The bowmen, seeing that they failed to make any impression, altered the direction of their shafts, and, instead of shooting point-blank, the flights of arrows were directed upwards, so that the points came down upon the heads of the men of England, and the iron shower fell with murderous effect. The English ranks were exceedingly distressed by the volleys, yet they still

stood firm ; and the Normans now employed a stratagem to decoy their opponents out of their entrenchments. A feigned retreat on their part, induced the English to pursue them with great heat. The Normans suddenly wheeled about, and a new and fiercer battle was urged. The field was covered with separate bands of foemen, each engaged with one another. Here, the English yielded—there, they conquered. One English thane, armed with a battleaxe, spread dismay amongst the Frenchmen. He was cut down by Roger de Montgomery. The Normans have preserved the name of the Norman baron, but that of the Englishman is lost in oblivion. Some other English thanes are also praised, as having singly, and by their personal prowess, delayed the ruin of their countrymen and country. At one period of the battle the Normans were nearly routed. The cry was raised that the duke was slain, and they began to fly in every direction. William threw off his helmet, and galloping through the squadrons, rallied his barons, though not without great difficulty. Harold, on his part, used every possible exertion, and was distinguished as the most active and bravest amongst the soldiers in the host which he lead on to destruction. A Norman arrow wounded him in the left eye ; he dropped from his steed in agony, and was borne to the foot of the standard, to which the English retreated as their rallying point. The Normans encircled them, and fought desperately to reach this goal. Robert Fitz-Ernest had almost seized the banner, but he was killed in the attempt.

“William led his troops on, with the intention, it is said, of measuring his sword with Harold. He did encounter an English horseman, from whom he received such a stroke upon his helmet that he was nearly brought to the ground. The Normans flew to the aid of their sovereign, and the bold Englishman was pierced by their lances. About the same time, the tide of battle took a momentary turn. The Kentish men and East Saxons rallied, and repelled the Norman barons. In the thick crowd of the assailants and the assailed, the hoofs of the horses were plunged deep into the gore of dead and the dying. Gurth was at the foot of the standard, without hope, but without fear : he fell by the falchion of William.

“The English banner was cast down, and the gonfanon, planted in its place, announced that William of Normandy was the conqueror. It was now late in the evening. The English troops were entirely broken, yet no Englishman would surrender. The conflict continued in many parts of the bloody field long after dark. The fugitives spread themselves over the adjoining country, then covered with wood and forest.

Wherever the English could make a stand, they resisted; and the Normans confess the great preponderance of their force, alone enabled them to obtain the victory. By William's orders, a spot close to the gonfanon was cleared, and he caused his pavilion to be pitched among the corpses which were heaped around. He there supped with his barons; and they feasted among the dead. But when he contemplated the fearful slaughter, a natural feeling of pity, perhaps allied to repentance, arose in his stern mind; and the abbey of Battle, in which prayer was to be offered up perpetually for the repose of the souls of all who had fallen in the conflict, was at once the monument of his triumph and the token of his piety. The abbey was most richly endowed; and all the land, for one league round about, was annexed to the Battle franchise. The abbot was freed from the authority of the metropolitan of Canterbury, and invested with archiepiscopal jurisdiction. The high altar was erected on the very place where Harold's standard had waved; and the roll, deposited in the archives of the monastery, recorded the names of those who had fought with the Conqueror, and amongst them the lands of broad England were divided. But all this pomp and solemnity has passed away like a dream. The 'perpetual prayer' has ceased for ever; the roll of Battle is rent; the shields of the Norman lineages are trodden in the dust. The abbey is levelled with the ground; and a dank and reedy pool fills the spot where the foundations of the quire have been uncovered, merely for the gaze of the idle visitor, or the instruction of the moping antiquary."

Historians differ as to the fate of the remains of Harold; but the writers of both nations agree, that with him and his brothers perished all the nobility of the south of England. William of Malmesbury states, the Conqueror surrendered the dead body of Harold to his mother Alghitha, by whose directions it was buried in the abbey of the Holy Cross. Those who lived nearer the time, assert in explicit terms that William refused the right of sepulchre to his enemy, on the plea of his dying excommunicated. His chaplain distinctly says, that a corpse, which from certain tokens, for the features could not be distinguished, was supposed to be that of Harold, was found between the dead bodies of his two brothers, and that William refused to give it to his mother, although offered its weight in gold; but ordered it to be interred on the sea shore, remarking, that as he had guarded the coast while living, he might guard it again after death. Others add, that the body being afterwards obtained by stealth or purchase, was buried in the church at Waltham. But the legends of Waltham Abbey have a



different version : they make no allusion to his mother, but state that two of their brethren who had accompanied him to the field of battle, hovered as nearly as possible to the scene of his personal contests ; and when the strife was ended in death, they humbly approached the Conqueror, and offering him a purse of gold obtained permission to seek for the body, and remove it to their church. Among the loathsome heaps of the slain, who lay divested of their clothes and of their armour, the good monks long sought, but they sought in vain ; no trace of Harold could be found, and as the last hope of identifying his remains, they brought his beloved wife Aldith, to join in the melancholy search, not doubting that she would be able to recognize him who was so familiar to her affections. The two monks with the sorrowing widow, resumed their miserable task, until a ghastly corpse was selected by Aldith, and conveyed to Waltham, where it was entombed at the east end of the choir, with great honour and solemnity ; many of the Norman knights assisting in the funeral rites. The monks in their anxiety to uphold the memory of their founder, have substituted Aldith the widow, for the "fair Edith," poetically surnamed the *Swan-Necked*,\*—the companion, at least, of Harold's earlier days. His wife, the widow of Griffith king of Wales, had previously deserted him at York, immediately after the defeat of the Norwegians, and the defection of her brothers Edwin and Morcar.

Another tradition alleges that Harold, though sorely wounded, escaped with his life. Years afterwards, when the Norman yoke pressed heavily upon the English, when the battle of Hastings had become a tale of sorrow, which old men narrated by the light of the embers, until warned to silence by the sullen tolling of the curfew, there was a decrepit anchorite who inhabited a cell near the church of St. John at Chester. Here, deeply scarred and blind of his left eye, he lived in strict penitence and seclusion. Henry I. on his return from an expedition against the Welsh, had a long private discourse with the aged recluse ; who on his death-bed declared to the attendant monks, that he was Harold. As the story has been transmitted to us, he had been secretly conveyed from the field, to a castle, probably Dover, and there he continued concealed until he had the means of reaching the sanctuary, where he expired. The place of

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\* Et vertentes ea huc et illuc, donec regis corpus agnoscerent, non valentes, \* \* \* mulierem quam, ante sumptum regimen, dilexerat Editha, cognomento *Swanneshales*, quod sonat Collum cygni, secum adducere. Harleian MSS, No. 3776 in the British Museum.

his interment is mentioned by Bromton, as being in the middle of the area, behind the cross, in St. John's church,—in that part now in ruins. The monks of Waltham, however, loudly exclaimed against this rumour; they maintained most resolutely that Harold was buried in their abbey; they pointed to the tomb sustaining his effigies, and inscribed with the simple and pathetic epithet, *Hic jacet Harold inflex*; and they appealed to the mouldering skeleton, the bones, of which as they declared, when disinterred, shewed the impress of the wounds he had received.\*

From the remarkable discrepancies in the various narratives of the inhumation of Harold, it is evident the exact circumstances were not known to the relators. The presumed escape of Harold would at once solve the difficulty, and reconcile the varying statements of those ancient writers whom it might have been supposed were better acquainted with the facts, as they lived much nearer to the period of their occurrence. The distinct and positive assertion of *Giraldus Cambriensis* who wrote in the twelfth century, that after the battle, Harold escaped and spent the remainder of his days as a hermit, in Chester, though generally disbelieved and considered as romantic, is by no means improbable. There were no walls to scale,—no wardens to elude. The examples of those that have survived after experiencing equal peril and greater difficulty, are so numerous and familiar, that the incident would hardly have given rise to a doubt had it not occurred to a king. May it not be questioned whether Osgood and Ailric, who followed their benefactor, to the field, did not aid in his ultimate escape? May they not have discovered him at the last gasp, and restored him to animation? The artifice of declaring to William they had not been able to discover the object of their search, would readily suggest itself as the means of furthering the removal of the wounded monarch. The request for Edith's assistance would confirm their assertion, and enable them to gain time to arrange for Harold's departure, and while the litter which bore a corps, was advancing in slow and solemn state to the abbey of Waltham, the living Harold, under the care of the tender Edith, might be proceeding to some distant fane, the haven of his refuge.†

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\* The Augustine Monks of this abbey, were rather famed for their superstition. Their abbey was endowed by Harold, and contained a crucifix of alleged miraculous virtue. "On the evening preceding the battle, Harold offered up his orisons at the altar; whilst the king was at prayers, in the darkness and gloom of the choir, the crucifix bowed its head. So portentous a movement was considered a presentiment of evil, to avert which the monks appointed ten of their brethren to accompany their benefactor."

† See the termination of Sir Francis Palgrave's work on the Anglo-Saxons.

There can, however, be no reason for supposing that the belief of Harold's escape was connected with any political feeling, for no hopes were fixed on the son of Godwin. No recollection dwelt upon his name as the hero who would sally forth from his seclusion, the restorer of Anglo-Saxon power; that power had wholly fallen; and if the humbled Englishman as he paced the aisles of Waltham looked around, and having assured himself that no Norman was nigh, whispered to his son, that the tomb which they saw before them was raised only in mockery, and that Harold still breathed the vital air, he yet knew too well, that the spot where Harold's standard had been cast down was the grave of the pride and glory of England.\*

The victory of Hastings was indeed a splendid realization of the ambitious schemes that William had been so long anxious to accomplish. But had not Harold fallen the possession of the throne of England would have been far distant from his victorious opponent. It was the death, or the presumed death, of Harold that alone placed the sceptre in the hands of William; for had unanimity marked the councils of the Anglo-Saxons, their country might have spurned from its soil the foot of the Norman Conqueror. Seven hundred vessels filled with Saxon troops were yet in the channel; and the country was full of armed men, wanting leaders to array them against the invader. But dissensions prevailed among the chiefs, and there was none of sufficient courage or importance to ascend the royal throne, and appeal to the nation to enable him to maintain it. Edwin and Morcar withdrew with their forces to their respective provinces, there to await the issue of their country's fate; other chieftains followed their example: and the Normans found a nation without a leader; a vacated empire, full of troops and resources.

The Conqueror, after destroying Romney, Dover, and some other places, where

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\* Giraldus has also another story respecting an Emperor of Germany, who on the point of death, at Chester, confessed his high rank. The historian calls him the "emperor Henry;" and Camden supposes he alludes to Henry IV. The Messrs. Lyson's say, he refers to Henry V.; but he, it is well known, died at Utrecht in 1125. In the Red Book of Chester Abbey the following entry occurs: "*Anno 1110: Rex Henricus dedit filiam suam Godescallo, Imperatori Alemanna qui nunc Cestria jacet.*" And in a survey of the streets of Chester, made "in the dais of King Henrie the third," there is described "a lane called Goddellstal, which goeth out of the said street into the said church yard; this Goddellstal lieth buried in the abbey church, in Chester, and was an emperour, and a vertuous disposed man in his living." An expression of Henry IV. in a letter to his son, when entreating for pecuniary aid, he says, "if you refuse me I will go and live as a poor cottager, in a foreign country, rather than thus wander in an empire which was once my own," supports the opinion, that the excommunicated emperor resided in Chester; yet the German writers have given the place of his death, and an account of the difficulty after experienced in finding an asylum for his remains.

small detachments of his forces had been defeated, proceeded towards London, in the expectation that his presence might lead the neighbouring country to a voluntary submission, for "at first in the great city no one thought of yielding to the Duke." But the departure of Edwin and Morcar discouraged those that remained; and that depression of spirit which is the result of civil discord, succeeded the first ebullition of national enthusiasm excited by the foreign invasion. After some negotiation London was surrendered to William, by the *Hansward*, who attended the Conqueror at his encampment at Berkhamstead, and there with the nominal King Edgar, with Stigand archbishop of Canterbury, and other ecclesiastics and chieftains of high rank, took the usual oaths of peace and allegiance, and left many of the principal citizens as hostages.

William, who had apparently evinced a disinclination to be crowned, yielded to the request of the Norman barons, by whom it was considered desirable he should be recognized as King of England, by the small number of Saxons he had succeeded in terrifying or corrupting, before they attempted to complete the conquests so successfully commenced. Anxious to appear the monarch of a united, though conquered people, he determined that the ceremony should be performed by a minister of the Anglican as well as the Norman church. And accordingly he applied to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had sworn fealty to him at Berkhamstead. Stigand, however, refused to join in the solemnities; "but Eldred," say the old historians, "more circumspect, and better advised, comprehending that it was necessary to conform to the times, and not act contrary to the will of God,\* by whom the powers of earth are exalted and constituted," consented to perform the important ceremony, which was appointed for the approaching Christmas-Day. At the commencement of the religious services Geoffrey, Bishop of Coutance, ascended a raised platform and, addressing the Normans in their own language, inquired if they were desirous their Lord should take the title of King of the English? at the same time the Archbishop of York asked the English, in Saxon, if they were willing to have the Duke of Normandy for their King? Such loud acclamations of assent were instantly raised in the Church, that they resounded beyond its gates and reached the ears of the numerous bodies of troops, both horse and foot, that were stationed in all the neighbouring avenues. The soldiery having mistaken this confused noise for a

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\* In Guil. Neubrig, p. 15, are the words, "Acutius intelligens cedendum esse tempori, et divinæ nequaquam resistendum ordinationi." And see Chron. Gualteri Hemingford, ii. 457.

cry of alarm, in obedience to secret orders, set fire to the adjacent houses. At the sight of the flames and the drawn swords of the military, most of the attendants, Normans as well as Saxons, rushed out of the abbey : the latter hastened to endeavour to extinguish the flames ; the former to plunder during the disorder.\* The ceremony was suspended by this unforeseen tumult. The Duke alone, remained in the church with the archbishops, and a few priests. They received in trembling, from him they saluted as king,—and who, according to the ancient narraties, himself also trembled†—the oath to treat the Saxon people as they had been treated by the best of kings whom they themselves had in former times elected. On the very day of this coronation, the city of London had reason to know the value of such an oath from a foreign Conqueror : an enormous war tribute or fine was imposed on the citizens ; and the hostages that had been left at Barking were consigned to a prison. The king, who could not rely on the benediction of Eldred, or the acclamations of the few cowardly Saxons who had hailed him monarch, did not venture to establish himself in London, or inhabit the castle or tower hastily constructed for his defence. He therefore left the city until his engineers had given greater solidity to those works, having first laid the foundations of two other fortresses, “to repress,” as his chaplain says, “the changeable spirit of a population too numerous and too fierce.”‡

If there were any portion of his newly acquired dominions that William had reason to treat with seerity, it was the city of London ; its burgesses had always evinced the strongest opposition to the Normans, they had been anxious for the distinguished honour of forming the royal body guard of Harold, and after his defeat, when the Wittenagemote assembled and nominated Edgar for their king, the Londoners were his warmest supporters. This may in some measure account for the difference between his conduct to them, and to the inhabitants of most other Saxon towns. No general partition of the conquered territories, took place in the first instance. The Saxons, in their persons and their properties, were generally protected from the ravages of the Normans, and few excesses were committed beyond those which signalized his coronation, until after his departure for Normandy. It was his interest to be as lenient to the

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\* Ut in tanta perturbatione sibi prædas diriperent. Orderic. Vital. Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. p. 503.

† Trepidantes      \*      \*      \*      officium consecrationis super regem vehementer trementem vix peregerunt. Ibid.

‡ Contra mobilitatem ingentis ac feri populi. Guil. Pict. 208.

Anglo-Saxons as circumstances would permit. Although he obtained the crown as a conqueror, he had originally claimed it as an heir, and he preferred to hold it by the tenure of descent, rather than that of conquest. He accordingly admonished his barons to treat the natives with equity and moderation, exhorting all his subjects, English and Norman, to mutual good will and interalliance. This advice to his nobles, and his own promises of protection, were frequently disregarded; while his severity to all who had in any manner opposed him was extreme.

An inquiry was made into the names and estates of all the English who had either fallen in battle or survived their defeat, and also into those of parties who, contrary to their intention, had been prevented, either by sickness or any other cause, from joining the Saxon standard; all the possessions of these classes were confiscated to the king. The children of the first were for ever cut off from any chance of inheriting the estates of their fathers. The second were likewise permanently disinherited, and (say the Norman authors) they themselves were quite sensible their lives were all they ought to expect from the hands of the conquerors. Lastly, even those who had not taken part in the battle were also stripped of all their possessions, for having intended to fight, but by special favour and clemency, they were permitted to hope that after many years of obedience and devotion to the foreign conqueror, their sons might obtain from the bounty of their new master, some portion of the paternal property. Such was the law of the conquest, according to the undoubted testimony of Ricardus Nigellus, or Richard Lenoir, Bishop of Ely in the 12th century, a prelate himself descended from the Norman invaders.

While these inquiries and confiscations were taking place, William remained at Barking, where he was attended by the great Saxon chiefs Edwin and Morcar, whose defection from Harold had been so fatal to his cause, and whose subsequent retreat from London had hastened its surrender. Alarmed at the power and influence the possession of that city, and the title of king, gave to the Conqueror, they came from the north to tender that oath of fealty which the English monarchs were accustomed to receive from their chieftains. But although the submission of the two great barons procured the restoration of their estates, previously denounced for confiscation, the provinces of Mercia and Northumberland, which they governed, were far from adhering to the Conqueror; nor was the Norman army enabled to advance against them. The time of William was fully occupied with the difficult task of endeavouring to comply

with the increasing demands of the rapacious host by which he was attended. Commissions of inquiry were issued through the whole of the country they had conquered. Inventories of all estates, public and private, were taken and registered with the greatest care and attention; for even in those remote times the Norman nation, as it has ever since been, was lavish of writings, public acts, and *proces-verbaux*.

The immense produce of the almost universal spoliation that ensued, served to reward the adventurers that had accompanied the Conqueror, who himself largely participated in the plunder, retaining, as his chaplain states, (page 200) "for his own share, all the treasure of the ancient kings, the gold vessels and ornaments of the churches, and all that was rare and precious that could be found in the shops." All the foreign churches in which prayers had been sung and tapers burned for the success of the invasion, were rewarded with crosses, chalices, and stuffs of gold; the barons and knights had extensive demesnes, castles, and even towns, granted to them; and the meaner vassals had smaller portions: some had the widows of the Saxon nobles allotted to them. One alone, of all the vast train of the Conqueror's warriors, refused to accept a portion of the confiscated property; Guilbert, the son of Richard, declared he followed his lord in compliance with his duty, and content with his own lands in Normandy, he would take no reward.

Before marching to the conquest of the northern and western parts of the kingdom, William, fearful of losing the vast treasures he had so abundantly acquired, determined for their better security, to deposit them in Normandy; he accordingly embarked with a large retinue of followers, at Pevensey, where, six months before, he had landed. In his suite were not only many of his own victorious companions, but several of the Saxon prelates and nobles, whom he had affected to honour by placing them among his personal attendants, but who, in fact, were only retained as hostages for the tranquillity of their country.

William remained in Normandy for several months without any indication of returning, being fully engaged in a continued series of feasts and festivals, in honour of the conquests he had obtained. In the meantime the rapacity of his soldiers and the apathy of the nobles, to whom he had entrusted the government during his absence, were fast driving the English into exile or insurrection. One party sent to offer the crown to the monarch of Denmark; the people of Kent broke into actual rebellion, while in Hereford,—which in the time of the Confessor had been bestowed on a

Norman chieftain,—Edric, surnamed the Wild, a young Saxon chief, aided by the Welsh, was everywhere successful, driving the Conqueror's troops from the shores of the Severn. These energetic proceedings at length attracted the notice of William, and he hastened to England, where he arrived in time to prevent a rebellion in the city of London: having secured the peace of the capital he proceeded to the westward, and was, after several successful engagements, enabled to reduce the malcontents to external submission. Exeter, which the Normans had not previously approached, fell into his hands rather by treachery than by force of arms, after a siege of eighteen days, and was immediately fortified and made one of his chief stations. But though the independent territories of the English were thus abridged in the west, the extensive provinces in the north, at once a place of retreat and a field of warfare, still afforded the Saxons an asylum; thither repaired those who were left without lands or kindred, and all who preferred to lead a life of toil and hardship rather than to endure a bondage unknown to their fathers. Several of those chieftains also, who at an early period had despaired of the common cause and yielded their voluntary submission to the Conqueror, were induced by repentance to follow. Under a false appearance of friendship and affection, William had held them captive, treating them as particular friends, and promoting them to the highest posts of his household; but at the same time, availing himself of their presence as a pretext for the adoption of coercive measures against such of the Saxons as did not bend in homage to him, when he was thus surrounded by their national chiefs. Among the principal of these were Edwin and Morcar, who having escaped from the court of the Conqueror, set out for the north; "the good wishes of the poor," say the English historians, "accompanying them, all the priests and the monks that were faithful to their country, offering up prayers for their safety." \* No sooner had they reached their ancient governments of Mercia and Northumberland, than the whole country from Oxford to the Tweed was in arms.

No Norman had hitherto passed the Humber, and few had penetrated into the heart of Mercia. The Welsh, forgetting their former feuds with the inhabitants of Cheshire and Shropshire, joined the Mercians with large bodies of troops, while many good men, as the Saxon chroniclers relate, hastened from the court of Malcolm king of Scotland, to make common cause with the English against the Normans. William

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\* *A clericis et monachis crebra pro illis fiebat oratio.* Orderic. Vital. p. 511.



hearing that Malcolm had acknowledged Edgar king of England, and that some of the Welsh princes had united with the Saxons, resolved not to wait until attacked, but to act vigorously on the offensive. From that moment a spirit of hostility marked the proceedings of the Conqueror, whose former clemency gave place to the most unrelenting severity. Oxford, Warwick, Leicester, Derby, Nottingham, and Lincoln, successively fell before his arms. Near the city of York he totally defeated the united army of Anglo-Saxons and Welsh; the few that escaped retreated towards Scotland; "thither," says an old chronicler, "retired many of great distinction, bishops, clerks, and men of all conditions, sorrowful at seeing their own cause the weakest, but not resigning themselves to slavery." \*

The Conqueror built a strong citadel at York, and made every preparation against any attack that might be made upon it; for the surrounding country was still unconquered, and the difficulty of its subjugation seemed to increase.

The war in the province or county of York having continued for upwards of a year, without any decided prospect of advantage or early conclusion, many of William's followers evinced much dissatisfaction. In order to revive their drooping spirits he reminded them of the scrupulous exactitude with which he had fulfilled all his former promises; he offered them far more lavish rewards than any he had previously bestowed; lands, money, and honours in abundance, were promised to all that remained faithful to him. Notwithstanding these inducements many of the principal barons withdrew; and William, who, foreseeing greater difficulties, was alarmed at their defection, sent his wife, by whom he had hitherto been accompanied, back to Normandy, in order that he might devote himself entirely to the war. It was not long before new events occurred to justify his uneasiness, and require all his exertions, which ultimately were successful.

Two of the sons of Harold landed with a body of troops from Ireland, and uniting with the Saxons in the west of England, caused a revolt in the counties of Dorset and Somerset. Although this was soon suppressed,† the movement thus commenced extended along the entire frontier of Wales. The men of the country about Chester, a part yet

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\* Mat. West. Flor. Hist. p. 225.

† To complete the destruction of the revolted people of Dorset and Somerset, Geoffrey, Bishop of Coutance, followed with the garrisons of London, Winchester, and Salisbury. He seized great numbers of men, either in arms or suspected, and most cruelly mutilated them." Orderic. Vital. 514.

free from all invasion, joining the Saxon soldiers of Shrewsbury, drove the Normans before them to the east, nearly as far as Stafford ; but there, however, the largest division of the insurgent troops were defeated, and soon afterwards Shrewsbury fell under the yoke of the Conqueror. During the winter William entered into some negotiations with the Danes, who had joined the English, but could not resist the Norman gold ; and at York he completed his triumphs over the Anglo-Saxons, who were much depressed at the defection of the Danish troops and fleet, by taking that city after a most severe struggle.

Once master of York, William pushed his troops by forced marches into Northumbria, committing ravages more dreadful than any that English history records. His object was to oblige such of the inhabitants that escaped the sword to abandon the country. To effect this the crops in the fields were destroyed by his soldiers, and the towns, hamlets, and even individual houses, burned ; cattle were butchered as freely as men. Between the Humber and the Tyne there remained not one single inhabited village, nor a piece of cultivated land. The few monasteries that even the Danish pagans had spared, and the convents of the nuns, were destroyed. And south of the Humber, according to the same narrator, the ravages were no less dreadful ; between York and the eastern Sea almost every human being was put to death. None escaped save those that sought refuge in the church of St. John at Beverley, and they were indebted for their lives to the superstition of the Normans. " This John was a saint of the English race ; and a number of men and women, carrying with them all that they considered most valuable, flocked round the church dedicated to their sainted countryman, in order that he, remembering in heaven he was a Saxon, might protect them and their property from the fury of the oppressor." The Norman troops were at that time encamped about seven miles from Beverley, the church of which was reported to be the great depository of the riches of the Saxons. A body of Norman foragers, headed by a chieftain of the name of Toustain, set out to seize the splendid booty ; they entered Beverley without resistance, and passed the gates of the church-yard, in which the suppliant crowd were assembled, invoking the protection of their patron saint. Toustain, casting his eyes over the groups of English, observed an aged man richly clad and wearing the golden bracelets, that according to the custom of his nation distinguished the possessors of much wealth. Brandishing his sword, the Norman chief galloped toward the terrified old man, who fled into the church : scarcely

had the feet of the horse, on which rode Toustain, touched the smooth and slippery pavement of the porch, than he fell and severely injured his rider : at the sight of their leader wounded, and half dead with alarm, the Normans paused, and their imaginations being much excited, they hastily retreated to the camp, to relate to their comrades the terrible example of the miraculous power of St. John of Beverley. When the Norman troops afterwards passed the town none dared to tempt the vengeance of the saint ; and the legends add, "that the lands of this church alone remained covered with houses and produce, in the midst of the devastated country."\*

Flushed with success, William pursued the Saxons to the great Roman wall that runs between the Tyne and the Solway Frith. Devastations the most awful marked his progress ; and famine, like a faithful companion, followed his footsteps. During the three years in which he had been engaged in this aggressive warfare a great scarcity prevailed in the subjugated provinces. His invariable system being to destroy as much cattle and corn as he could. The famine thus created, and which extended through all the northern counties, was at this period [1070] at its greatest height : in one year upwards of a hundred thousand persons died from starvation. The conquered inhabitants of York, after feeding upon the dead horses of the Norman cavalry, were obliged to have resource to human flesh. "Often," says Roger de Hoveden, "for the remnants of the meal of one of the meanest followers in the army, would some Saxon, once illustrious, but now wasted and depressed by hunger, come and sell himself and his family to perpetual slavery."† While the unfortunate natives were reduced to such destitution the Norman troops had vast magazines of corn, wine, and provisions of every description in their fortresses ; and constant supplies were arriving for their use from the continent, purchased with the gold and other treasures extorted from the conquered Saxons.

The confiscation of their estates and the destruction of their property appear to have completely subdued the courage and confidence of the great Saxon chiefs, who again entered into a compromise, to which the Conqueror was more willing to accede, in consequence of the great difficulty he experienced in vanquishing, or rather retaining

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\* Nec terra aliqui erat culta, excepto solo territorio beati Joannis Beverlaci. Chron. Johan. Bromton, vol. i. col. 966. Selden edit.

† Alii in servitutem se vendiderunt dummodo qualitercumque miserabilem vitam sustentarent. P. 451.

Northumberland. This reconciliation, ruinous to the Saxon cause, took place at the Norman camp on the banks of the Tees, where Waltheof, Gospatrick, Edwin, and Morcar, again tendered to William those oaths of allegiance they had previously broken.

The conquest of the provinces in the north-western parts of the country bordering upon Wales, and that of Chester, the only great town in England whose streets had not resounded with the tread of the Norman cavalry, next engaged the attention of the king, and was to him a subject of the greatest anxiety. The most exaggerated accounts had been circulated, of the difficult nature of the roads, of the position of the city, of its numerous inhabitants, and of their obstinate courage.\* Many of his nobles, worn out with the reduction of Northumberland, and alarmed at these rumours, demanded their discharge, and some actually retired to Normandy, abandoning the lands with which they had already been rewarded; but the persuasions and professions of William prevailed over the great majority: he promised them, as usual, great rewards, and that as the conquest of Chester was the last of his projects, they should then repose after their victory. A general attack having been resolved upon, the army advanced in three great divisions, William himself leading the centre, and the wings being entrusted to two of his principal warriors.

Guilbert de Lacy, to whom the immense domains of Pontefract had been allotted for his previous services, led the northern division. He was the first that crossed the mountains west of York, and invaded Lancaster, then considered part of Cheshire, which fell an easy prey to the Norman arms.

Edric the Wild, the great partizan chieftain of Wales, leader of the confederated Welsh and Saxon forces, was taken prisoner by Raoul de Mortemer, who commanded the other division of the Norman troops, with which he penetrated into the land of the Cambrians, and thus commenced the design of conquering the Welsh, which from that time was unremittingly pursued by the English.

The main body of the Norman forces, led by the Conqueror in person, crossed the central chain of hills that divide the country, by roads previously considered impassable for cavalry, and proceeded direct to Chester, which on his approach surrendered without opposition. According to his usual custom, he built a strong fortress in the

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\* *Locorum asperitatem et hostium terribilem ferocitatem.* Orderic. Vital. Hist. 545.

city, and after creating the earldom of Chester, which he conferred upon Walter de Gherbaud, and remaining some time in the north, he returned to the royal citadel at Winchester, having reduced the entire country from Tweed to Cornwall into subjection.

A few detached bands, soldiers without leaders, or chieftains without followers, might occasionally be met with, for which the Isle of Ely, unapproachable by cavalry or heavy armed infantry, was the place of retreat. But the numbers that resorted to this *Camp of Refuge*,—then, as it had been before called,—were greatly increased by the atrocities which the Normans exercised against the Saxon bishops. Every day some Saxon of rank, layman or priest arrived, bringing with him the remnant of his fortune, or the last contribution of his church. At length this assumed so formidable an attitude that William, alarmed moreover by the turbulent aspect of the Londoners, invited a deputation of the Anglo-Saxon prelates and chieftains to meet him at Berkhamstead, a town that had before been so fatal to the independence of their country: The proceedings of this conference are minutely detailed by the old chroniclers. The Conqueror ordered all the relics in the church of St. Albans to be brought to the place of meeting, where after a long discussion upon the grievances of which the Anglo-Saxons complained, he promised them redress. A missal, opened at the gospels, was laid upon the relics, and William, then placing himself in a situation similar to that into which he had seduced Harold, swore by the beatified bones, and the Holy Gospels, to observe inviolably the just and ancient laws which the former good and pious kings of England, and especially Edward the Confessor, had established.

The Saxon prelates were pacified by these assurances: and bishop Wulfstan, the only ecclesiastic of the English race that retained his bishopric, was dispatched to Chester, to allay the popular ferment in the west, and to make a pastoral visitation in the northern provinces, which no Norman had previously ventured to visit. The Saxon chieftains also appeared to acquiesce with their priests, and the *Camp of Refuge* was once again soon deserted; the earls that had there assembled yielding either to their own fears, or to the gold of the Conqueror.

But this semblance of allegiance was far from sincere, and the departure of William a second time for Normandy, in 1073, afforded the Saxons another opportunity to raise the standard of revolt, to which they were, in fact, excited by the Earl of Hereford, and other Norman barons. They were, however, unsuccessful; their united forces, after several engagements, were defeated by the bishops of Coutance and of

Bayeux; many of their principal captains slain; and it is related that these prelates caused the right foot of every prisoner to be cut off.\* This final struggle of the Saxon people was the last outbreak against the Norman monarch; the meeting at Norwich, at which it had been resolved upon, was composed of all that resisted the wishes of the Conqueror. Saxon peers, yet panting for their country's independence; Norman bishops and barons, offended at the distribution of the plunder; even bands of Welshmen, instigated by the Earl of Hereford, joined the assembly, at which among the more illustrious conspirators was Waltheof, who had married the king's niece and had been created Earl of Northumberland Huntingdon and Northampton. Ostensibly it was held to celebrate a marriage expressly forbidden by the Conqueror, a nuptial feast, "that," say the Norman chronicles, "was fatal to all who attended it."† Waltheof, accused of having invited over a body of Danish troops to aid the confederates, denied the charge, but upon the testimony of his wife he was found guilty. The court were divided respecting the sentence that should be passed on him; and their debates were protracted during several sittings of the Great Council for nearly a year, before he suffered at Winchester. The execution of Waltheof completed the depression of the vanquished people. The English had not relinquished all hope of seeing the Saxon dynasty restored, so long as they beheld one of their own race invested with great power, even though he was a vassal to the Conqueror. But after the death of the son of Seward there was no man clothed with authority, or ennobled with honours, that did not regard the Anglo-Saxons as enemies. They were at the lowest state of depression; their nobles were nearly all slain; their properties in almost every instance confiscated; all the ecclesiastical authorities were deposed except Wulfstan, who retained the bishopric of Worcester: he was of English descent, and although he had rendered many and very important services to the Conqueror, the day of his trial at length arrived. In 1076 he was cited to appear at Westminster, before a council of Norman bishops and barons, by whom he was required to resign his bishopric, on the singular charge, that he was unfit to exercise the episcopal functions among the Anglo-Saxons, because he could not speak French. Astonished and indignant at such a charge Wulfstan defended himself in a manner which so alarmed the superstitious Normans

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\* Cujuscumque conditionis sint, dextrum pedem ut notificentur amputant. Order. Vital, p. 535.

† Ubi eæ nuptiæ erant omnibus qui aderant fatales. Chron. Sax. ed. Gibson, p. 182.

that neither their monarch nor any of the assembled council, dared to repeat their demand that he should relinquish the emblems of his pastoral charge.\*

There was little after this to engage the Conqueror, who tired with twenty years active warfare appeared anxious for repose, but was yet desirous to obtain a more complete personal supremacy over his companions in arms. In furtherance of this purpose he imposed a tax upon all the land in the kingdom, without distinction in favour of any one holder or person. Pecuniary necessities may have obliged him to have recourse to this expedient, for the confiscated properties of the Saxons could no longer be available to fill his coffers, which the expenses of the war had so greatly drained.

All the lands that had belonged to the Anglo-Saxons had been divided among the Normans; those which the king did not retain in his own hands he distributed among the military adventurers that followed him, and they were by no means few. The roll of Battle Abbey, as given by Ralph Holinshed, contains the names of six hundred and twenty-nine Norman knights who having shared in the fortunes of the Conqueror, were claimants for a participation in the lands of England.

In the distribution of the Saxon estates the recognized system of feudalism appears to have been the rule of partition. Feudalism was previously unknown in England; at all events, it did not exist as a system. By a fundamental law of the Saxons, all their lands were held subject to three distinct duties: first, the building and upholding of castles; secondly, the building and maintenance of bridges; and thirdly, the military defence of the realm. But this military defence is clearly known to have been confined to the "expugnation of foreign invaders," not service due to a peculiar chief as a return for lands held from him, which was the characteristic of feudal service.

The Saxon lands had been held under various tenures:

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\* Arising with his crozier in his hand, he walked straight to the tomb of Edward the Confessor; and, addressing himself to the departed monarch, exclaimed, "Edward, from thee I received this staff; to thee, therefore, do I return and confide it." Then turning to the Normans, he said, "I received it from hands more worthy than yours; I have replaced it therein: do you, if you have the power, take it therefrom." *Edwarde, dedisti mihi baculum, et ideo illum tibi committo. Annales Burtonienses, Gale's, i. 264, and Chron. Johan. Bromton, col. 976. Melior te, hunc mihi dedit; cui et retrado. Avella si poteris.* Henry Knyghton de event. Angl. lib. ii. col. 2368. The popular imagination transformed this event into a miracle; and it was believed throughout the length and breadth of the land, that when Wulfstan's staff struck the stone, it entered therein as deeply as if it had been soft earth, and that when the Saxon judges reversed the sentence they had propounded, none but himself could draw it out! No wonder, then, that upon his death,—he was succeeded by a Norman Canon of Bayeux,—the native English bestowed on him the title of Saint, *Sanctus Wulfstanus*, as occurs in *Annal. Burton. i. 249*, and other records.

1. The *Thane Land*, Charter, or Bocland, of which consisted the far greater part of the estates of the Saxons, was undoubtedly allodial† and hereditary. 2. The *Beneficium* was granted on terms of military service, to one particular leader, and was not hereditary; being sometimes for life, for a limited number of years, or even for one year. 3. There was also the *Folkland*, that held by the commoners, or yeomanry of England, the strength and security of the nation; this was like the *Beneficium*, free from feudal service in not being entirely hereditary, but bound to return annually a stated quantity of provisions. 4. The estates of the Church were generally held by what was called *Frank Almoign*, implying no feudal service of any kind, except in the shape of masses and prayers which were required to be said or sung, in return for grants or lands from nobles and princes, on behalf of the donors or their families. 5. The *Slaves* were in more abject bondage than the continental *villans* or *villagers*; they were mere tillers of the land, occupying only what was requisite for their subsistence, and usually bought and sold with it.

Such were the institutions of the people with whom William and his army, impressed with the doctrines of feudalism, found themselves environed after the battle of Hastings. His own wishes, his prejudices, and those of his followers, led to the adoption of that feudal system, and the apportionment of lands, on principles decidedly opposite to those of the conquered English. It is unnecessary here to trace the origin of the feudal system. In its commencement it was a sort of conventual or constitutional organization, adopted by military adventurers for purposes of general defence and mutual support, or aggrandizement. Its distinguishing character was the distribution of territory upon one general principle or condition, namely, that of military service on the part of the holders of each estate, to the leader from whom he obtained it.

In the distribution of the Saxon lands, allodial, or free lands were done away with; each leader received his fief from the Conqueror, on the conditions of his military service; each again enfeoffed his vassals in smaller portions of the forfeited estate, and this was continued until the system of subinfeudation was complete.

Nearly all the lands having thus become vested in the Normans, by conquest and

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† Allodial, or free lands, in distinction to lands feudal, held upon tenure of military service; those which, according to the Glossary of Lindenbrogius, a person could either sell or bestow as his own property. See Oldfield's Representative History, Vol. 1, p. 96.



confiscation, the state became organized by the barons, holding under the crown in chief; the vavasours under the barons; the valvasini held under the vavasours, and generally possessed one or more knights' fees.\* Under them were the yeomanry, holding by free soccage, and owing no duty but the general one of realm defence; and last of all were the villani or slaves. Such was the system under which the broad lands of England were divided at the conquest, when she presented the singular spectacle of a native population, with a foreign sovereign and a foreign aristocracy. But this division had barely sufficed to pacify the immediate cravings of the Norman bands. It was to afford a continuity of personal revenue that William imposed the land tax, a measure which created great difference between the Conqueror and his barons. The king accused the nobles of being more desirous of increasing their own wealth than of contributing to that of the state; that by opposing the tax they limited his pecuniary means of preparing to repel any enemy, foreign or native. The barons, on the other hand, reproached him with seeking under false pretexts of general utility, to accumulate in his own hands, the wealth that had been acquired by the joint exertions of all.

These differences, which at one period assumed a most serious aspect, and a desire to settle on a firm basis the demands he had made for contributions, or as they were then called "services in money," induced the king to order a general survey to be made of all lands in the kingdom, stating the value of each manor or estate, by whom held, its dimensions, the names of its owners, and its value in the reign of king Edward the Confessor. The result of these inquiries, which occupied a period of six years, was embodied in two volumes, generally known as the DOOMSDAY BOOK. By the translation of that part of this survey which relates to the Hundred of WIRRAL, and which will be found, together with an explanation of most of the terms used in it, in the *Appendix*, it will be seen, that with the exception of a few townships that were held by the Bishop of Chester, and the Abbey Church of St. Warburgh, all the lands in the hundred had been conferred on the retainers of the Conqueror. The importance of the events which led to a change so material in the tenure of the lands and properties, may perhaps justify the length to which this chapter has been extended,—a length incompatible with a local history.

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\* The term Radman, which occurs in Domesday, is generally referred to a class inferior to the Valvasini, persons not holding a knight's fee, whose services include those of a horse. This subject is very ably treated upon by Mr. James in the introduction to his late work, "Richard Cœur de Lion."

THE  
COUNTY AND CITY OF CHESTER.



O thou thrice happy Shire, confin'd so to be,  
'Twixt two so famous floods as Mersey is, and Dee:  
Thy Dee upon the west from Wales both thee divide;  
Thy Mersey on the north, from the Lancastrian side,  
Thy natural Sister-Shire; and linkt unto thee so,  
That Lancashire along with Cheshire still doth go.

But in that famous town, most happy of the rest,  
From which thou tak'st thy name, fair Chester! call'd of old  
Eborac; whilst proud Rome her conquests here did hold  
Of those her legions known the faithful station then,  
So stoutly held to tack by those near North-Wales men;  
Yet by her own right name had rather called be,  
As her the Britons term'd, the Fortress upon Dee,  
Than bat'ly she would seem a miracle to stand,  
Th' imaginary work of some huge giant's hand:  
Which if such eber were, tradition tells not who.

POLYOLBION, Book xi.



ALFRED the Great when he divided the kingdom into Counties, Hundreds, and Tythings, apportioned Cheshire into twelve hundreds; but about the latter part of the reign of king Edward III. their names were altered, and subsequently their number was reduced to seven. The ancient hundreds of Riseton and Roelay were included in that of EDDISBURY; those of Bochelau and Tunendon in BUCKLOW; and those of Dudestan and Cestre in that of BROXTON. Wilaveston or Willawston resigned its name to WIRRAL. Hamestan was made MACCLESFIELD; Warmondestrou was transformed to NANTWICH; and Mildlestrie or Mildesvic forms the present NORTHWICH. Atticros and Erestan, formerly hundreds of Cheshire, were, by 33rd Henry VIII., transferred to Flintshire; and that part of Cestre which is not

included in Broxton, was made a distinct county of itself, namely, the County of the City of Chester. By the Reform Bill, [2 WILL. IV. cap. 45] the county was divided into two parts: the southern division, formed of the five hundreds, Wirral, Broxton, Eddisbury, Nantwich, and Northwich, and the City of Chester; the northern consisting of Bucklow, and Macclesfield.

As several of the townships in Wirral were held under the Abbey of Chester, and the whole of the remaining part either by or under Lupus, the first earl of Chester; it may not be inappropriate to devote a few pages to the history of that city, of its earls, and of its great religious establishment, before entering upon the details of each township in the hundred.

The origin of the CITY of CHESTER may be truly said to be buried in obscurity; for it is impossible to ascertain the date of its foundation. The conjecture of Sir Thomas Elliot, that it was called *Neomagus*, after Magus the son of Samothis, the son of Japhet, by whom it was founded about 240 years after the latter escaped with his father from the flood,—a conjecture which the worthy knight gravely asserts “to be fully authenticated, and to place it on a line of antiquity with any city in the universe,”—is as little entitled to credit as the legend of Ranulph the Monk of Chester, who in his *Polychronicon* ascribes it to Leon Vawr, a great giant.\* It appears to have borne a variety of names: at one time *Cærleon-vawr*, the city of Leon the great, referring to the eighth king of Britain, probably the giant alluded to; at another, *Cærleir* and *Cærleil*, after two British kings that repaired the walls which surrounded the city. But it is likely that the ancient British name of Cær Leon Vawr was the more correct, for “they cannot deny,” says Camden, “that Leon Vawr, in British, signifyeth ‘a great legion;’ and whether it stands more with reason and equity that a city should take its name from a great legion, rather than from a great giant, let the learned judge.”

Chester must have been of some importance anterior to the arrival of the Romans, for they made it one of their principal stations. It is most probable their fortress, the site of the present castle, was built by Ostorius Scapula, for the better security of the

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\* The latter derivation has even of late met with supporters, from the bones of a very large human foot having been dug up within the walls, near to Pepper Street.

Roman troops after the defeat of Caractacus, as there is express testimony that the castle was built by the soldiers of the Twentieth Legion, surnamed the Victorious, which was stationed at Chester, having outposts at Aldford, and at Cærgwele. The allusion to this in the name of *Cærleon ar dwfr y Dwy*, "the city of the great legion on the water of Dee," seems to be connected with the foundation of its Cær, castle, fortress, or stronghold. The formation of the walls so closely accords with the instructions of Vitruvius as almost to demonstrate their Roman origin, although by some they have been attributed to Marius, a British king. By the Romans it was called "Cestria, Chester, now the only and proper name of this city; for the additions to the word in the instance of Dorchester, Winchester, and towns similarly named, only render this the more pre-eminent, and, as it were, the principal Chester in the kingdom."

Few places were more benefitted by the presence of the Romans than Chester, and probably there is none in the kingdom that yet retains so strong an impress of their skill, ingenuity, and refinement. Soon after the withdrawal of their troops the city and castle fell into the hands of the ancient Britons or Welsh, who from the strength of the Roman works, and the wild mountains in the rear of Chester, were enabled to bid defiance to the Saxons, long after the complete subjugation of all the neighbouring parts of the country, except *Venedotia* or North Wales, of which this city was then considered to be the capital.

Little is found in any ancient writers, whose works are worthy of notice, that refers to the events of this period, comprising a space of nearly three centuries, except one memorable occurrence. St. Augustine, originally delegated by Pope Gregory with a train of forty monks to convert the Saxons to Christianity, found the numerous brethren of the great monastery of Bangor Iscoed, the most strenuous opposers of the Church of Rome: their seven bishops, with a number of the most learned monks, were appointed to meet the famous missionary in a conference, at which he insisted they should alter certain rites in their church, keep the feast of Easter at the same time as he did, so as "to preach the word of life with him and his fellows," and consequently submit to the metropolitan authority of the Pope. This they absolutely refused; and, declaring they would remain independent of all foreign supremacy, Augustine was induced by his pontifical pride to excite Ethelfred, king of the Northumbrians, who had been converted by some of the followers of the primate, to assist him in enforcing obedience to the demands of the church. Ethelfred marched towards Chester, under

the walls of which the Britons, commanded by Brockmael Yscothioc, or Brockwel Ysgythrog, king of Powis, (in some writings called earl or consul of Chester,) encountered his forces, but they were defeated with immense slaughter, the Welsh king with about fifty of his followers alone escaping. The city of Chester was immediately occupied by the Northumbrian monarch. The piety of the ancient Britons brought twelve hundred monks from the adjacent monastery of Bangor, who had arranged themselves on a neighbouring hill, to assist their countrymen during the conflict with their prayers. Having been taken by Ethelfred, when he was made acquainted with their intentions, he ordered their immediate death, and the destruction of their magnificent convent.

This celebrated establishment is supposed to have been the oldest in Britain, having been founded for an university by Lucius, the first Christian Prince of Britain; but at what period is now unknown, for various dates from 99 to 191 are assigned to the conversion of Lucius, and equally uncertain is that at which it became a monastery. There had emanated from it many of the most distinguished names on the rolls of ecclesiastical antiquity, among others Pelagius, so conspicuous for his activity in disseminating the heretical and unscriptural doctrine of the perfectibility of human virtue,—first taught by Rufinus the Scythian, at Rome. Soon after the slaughter of its monks, in 607, the monastery became neglected, and shortly went entirely to decay. William of Malmesbury, who lived in the reign of Stephen, asserts that when he visited it, he found only the magnificent ruins of several churches and large buildings; but no vestige of the monastery, or even of the city, can now be found. The number of the monks would appear incredible, did we not know from the venerable Bede that “in this monastery there was such a number of monks, that being divided into seven portions which had every one of them a several head and ruler over them, yet every one of these had no fewer than three hundred men, who were wont to live all of their handy labour.”\*

The Britons must very soon afterwards have regained possession of the city, for according to Ralph Holinshead a general council of their princes was held at Chester, in 613, when Cadwan was elected king; and Harding, in his versified “Chronicles of

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\* In the notes to the 11th song of Drayton's *Polyolbion* is a detailed character of these monks and their occupations, to which the reader is referred.

England unto the reign of king Edward the fourth," mentions that his son and successor, Calwall, was also crowned there.

Although the greater part of the county of Chester had been for a very long period under the dominion of the Saxons, forming part of their kingdom of Mercia, it was only in or about 828 that Egbert, having united all the states of the heptarchy, was enabled to expel the Britons from the city, which, with very few intermissions, they had retained for upwards of two hundred years. It is probable that Chester was afterwards made an occasional royal residence, for Harding distinctly says, that Ethelwolf, the son and successor of Egbert, "was crowned at his city of West Chester with all royal estate."

In 895 the Danes retreating before the victorious Alfred towards Chester, seized the castle, in which they were immediately besieged by the Anglo-Saxons; unable to carry the city and castle by assault, they destroyed all the corn and provision in the neighbourhood, and reduced the Danes to such extremities, that after feeding on the flesh of their horses they were glad to evacuate the city, which they had reduced to a heap of ruins, and make their escape into North Wales. Having obtained possession of Chester, so justly considered the key to North Wales, Alfred placed its government under the special care of the earls of Mercia, who also bore the title of earl of Chester. The first of these was Ethelred who "restored the city and enclosed it with new walls, and made it nigh two such as it was before, so that the castle that was sometime by the water without, is now within the walls."\* His widow, the celebrated *Ladye of Mercia*, as she is usually styled, and of whom mention has already been made, (see pages 15 and 16) retained the government for many years in her own hands.

Little is known of the proceedings of the second earl Alfer during the seventeen years he held the government of Mercia, beyond that we are informed by Hoveden, 427, and Florentius, 361, he destroyed many abbeys, turning out both the abbots and monks, and bringing in clergymen with their wives; and that in 983,—being in that year, according to William of Malmesbury, "eaten to death with lice,"—he was succeeded by his son Alfric. Alfer was the favourite and near relation of Edgar, who swayed the sceptre of England, and was in the practice of making an annual circumnavigation of his dominions. Full details have been handed down of the manner in

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\* Trevisa's translation of the sixth book of the Polychronicon; but the enclosing of the Castle is doubted by many.

which, on one of his visits, in 971, he was rowed from his palace near Chester to the monastery of St. John, by eight tributary kings. There is, however, some reason to doubt this assertion, although mentioned by many old writers;\* for the words used by several are so identically the same, that it is evident they have copied from each other; while the more recent author Webb, in the *Vale Royal*, only gives as his authority what he says he "found ready writ to his hand;" and Dr. Campbell in his "Lives of the British Admirals" merely reduces the legend into a modern form, from which, as illustrative of the state of the English maritime forces at that period, the subjoined note is extracted.† Michael Drayton in a note to the 6th canto of the *Polyolbion*, has the

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† Wm. Malmes. 56, Hen. Hunting., and Roger de Hoveden, 426, state the number to be six; but the Monk of Chester calls them eight, in which he is followed by Webb, in the following lines. See also Dr. Cowper's Notes on his poem of *Il Penseroso*.

"Edgar, England's famous king, of nations great commander,  
About the Northern British coasts did pass the seas with wonder;  
With navy great he did at last the City of Legions enter,  
To whom eight other petty kings their homage there did tender.  
The first of them was ——— call'd, and king of Scots was then,  
And Malcolm of Cumberland, with Macon, king of Man,  
The other five was called thus ——— South Wales ruling,  
Sfeth and Huall, both of them all North Wales then commanding;  
King James, a man of great renown, did Galloway command,  
And Inkil, then a famous king, did rule all Cumberland.  
All these at Edgar's high command, made haste, and then did swear,  
To serve him truly, sea and land, and put their foes in fear.  
These all at once a barge did take, when Edgar took the helm,  
And plac'd the rest at oar each one, he being then supreme,  
Did guide his course, they rowing hard upon the river Dee,  
Thereby he well might boast himself the English king to be.  
Thus by so many under kings, which he had then ordain'd,  
His royal state and dignity with honour was maintain'd."

† "All writers agree, that Edgar's fleet was far superior and more powerful than those of all the other European princes put together; but they are by no means of the same mind, as to the number of ships of which it was composed. Some fix it at three thousand six hundred; others at four thousand eight hundred. However, the first seems to be the most probable number; and, therefore, to it we shall keep. These ships he divided into three fleets, each of twelve hundred sail; one on the east, another on the west, and the third on the north coast of the kingdom: neither was he satisfied with barely making such a provision; he would likewise see that it answered the ends for which he intended it. In order to this, every year, after Easter, he went on board the fleet stationed on the eastern coast; and sailing west, he scoured all the channels, looked in to every creek and bay, from the Thames' mouth to the Land's end in Cornwall; then, quitting these ships he went on board the western fleet, with which, steering his course to the northward, he did the like not only on the English and Scotch coast,

following:—"Upon comparing our stories, I find them to be Kenneth of Scotland, Malcolm of Cumberland, Malenze king of the Isles, (whom Malmesbury gives only the name of Archpirate,) Donald, Siffreth, Howel, Jago, and Inchithil, kings of Wales. All these, he (thus touched with imperious affection of glory) sitting at the stern, compelled to row him over Dee; his greatness as well in fame as truth, daily at this time increasing, caused multitudes of aliens to admire and visit his court, as a place honoured above all other by this so mighty and worthy a prince: and through that abundant confluence, such vicious conduct followed by example, that even now was the age, when first the more simple and frugal natures of the English grew infected with what, in some part, yet we languish. For before his time, the Angles, hither traduced, being *homines integri*, and using *naturali simplicitate sua defensare, aliena non mirari*, did now learn from the strange Saxons an uncivil kind of fierceness, of the Flemings effeminacy, of the Danes drunkenness, and such other; which so increased, that, for amendment of the last, the king was driven to constitute quantities in quaffing-bowls by little pins of metal, set at certain distances, beyond which, none durst swallow in that provocation of good fellowship."

That Edgar had a palace in Chester, and that he visited it, seems unquestionable, though no remains of it are now traceable; for its site, referred to in many ancient writings, is marked on several old maps, and particularly on one executed in the time of Queen Elizabeth, by the words *Ruinosa domus Comitum Cestriensis*, which appear on a space representing a field in Handbridge, to the right of the bridge, still called *Edgar's Field*.

It would be very difficult to condense in a moderate space the various acts of treason and cowardice, which distinguished the life of the third earl, Alfrie, previously to his deposition, in 1007, when he was succeeded by Edric, the fourth earl, who, if possible, was worse than his immediate predecessor. He is shortly described by

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but also on those of Ireland and the Hebrides, which lie between them and Britain; then meeting the northern fleet, he sailed in it to the Thames' mouth. Thus surrounding the island every summer, he rendered any invasion impracticable, kept his sailors in continual exercise, and effectually asserted his sovereignty over the sea. As a farther proof of this, he once held his court at Chester; where, when all his feudatory princes had assembled, in order to do him homage, he caused them to enter a barge; and sitting four on one side and four on the other, they rowed, while he steered the helm; passing thus in triumph, on the river Dee, from his palace to the monastery of St. John, where he landed, and received their oaths to be his faithful vassals, and to defend his rights by land and by sea: and then, having made a speech to them, he returned to his barge, and passed in the same manner back to his palace."



Florentius as "the son of Egelricus, of low kindred, and to whom, nevertheless, his eloquent tongue and crafty wit procured great riches and honours; and for envy, falsehood, pride, and cruelty, he exceeded all men at that time." The just reward of his crimes has already been noticed on page 17. The frequent invasions of the Danes were conducted with such policy, as to induce many of the dissatisfied Saxon nobles to favour their designs. Edmund Ironsides, with a view to relieve the distresses of the metropolis and middle counties, carried the war into the north-western parts of the kingdom, in which the greatest portion of the partizans of the invaders resided, and upon which he committed great devastation. The city of Chester, in particular, is stated to have suffered greatly.

Edric was succeeded by Leofric, who by Henry Huntington, is called *Leofricus Consul Nobilissimus Cestræ*, being the first that is expressly called earl of Chester; by Ingulphus he is also styled earl of Leicester; but in fact he was governor of all Mercia, which then comprehended sixteen or eighteen counties: he was a man of amazing wealth and influence. During his long life, which extended through the reigns of the Danish monarchs and most of that of the Confessor, he founded several monasteries, among others that of St. Warburgh at Chester, and that of Coventry, which he endowed far above any other in the kingdom. His wife was the fair Godiva so celebrated in the history of Coventry, in the monastery of which he was buried, in 1057.

Algar the son of Leofric, was the sixth earl; on several occasions during the life of his father, when holding the earldom of the East Saxons, he was banished the kingdom, but by the aid of the Norwegians and the Welsh, was reinstated. He had only held the government of Chester for two years, and in that short period he had been guilty of treason, when he was seized with a fatal illness, of which he died, in 1059, leaving two sons and two daughters, all of whom occupy distinguished places in our annals. Of his sons Edwin and Morcar, frequent mention has been made; Aldith his eldest daughter, was first married to Griffith, king of Wales, and afterwards to the unfortunate Harold of England; the second daughter, Lucio, had in succession three husbands, the last of whom was Randle des Meschines, earl of Chester. Her first husband was Ives Taille-Bois, earl of Anjou, and captain of the Angevine auxillaries, who received with her all the ancient demesnes of the family of Algar. Many of these being in Lincolnshire and Cambridge, Ives fixed his abode there, and

and became what in Saxon was called the *hlaford*, and by contraction the *lord* of those lands.\*

Edwin having succeeded to his father, as earl of Mercia, was in possession of that government when the Conqueror landed, in 1066; and though he fought with Harold at the great battle of York, he certainly deserted him soon afterwards. Having had occasion frequently to allude to Edwin and Morcar, the sequel of their tale is soon told. In 1072, after enduring much distress, the two brothers found their way to the camp of Refuge, in the isle of Ely. William having succeeded with the priests, as related in page 46, next employed artifice with the chiefs; and Morcar, for the third time the dupe of false promises, quitted the camp of Ely for the Norman court; but scarcely had he got beyond the trenches raised by his countrymen, than he was taken prisoner, and sent in chains to the castle of Beaumont in Normandy. The last time he is mentioned in history is immediately previous to the death of the Conqueror, "when," Robert of Gloucester says, "the king, aware of the approach of death, sent money to the churches, the convents, and the poor, of England, to purchase remission for the robberies he had committed;† and ordered Morcar and other Saxon chiefs to be set at liberty." The fate of Edwin is well ascertained, and very different to that related by our local historians. He left the camp of Ely immediately after his brother, not like him to surrender himself, but to attempt the deliverance of Morcar. For several months he was occupied in assembling his partizans in England, and seeking

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\* This name properly signifies a distributor or giver of bread, and was then used to designate the head of a great house, him whose table fed a number of men. But for this inoffensive signification other ideas were substituted, ideas of dominion and servitude, when the men of the conquest received from the natives the title of Lords. The inhabitants of the domain trembled in the presence of the Norman lord; and it was not without terror they approached his manor-house or his *hall* as the Saxons termed it; a dwelling house once hospitable to all, where the door was always open and the fire always blazing; now fortified, walled, and embattled, filled with arms and soldiers; at once the citadel of its master and the prison of the vicinity. Thier's Norm. Conq. lib. 5.

And if the following account, given in the History of Croyland Abbey, be correct they had good cause so to tremble: "therefore," says Ingulphus, "all the people of the low country were very careful to appear humble before Ives Taille-Bois, and never to address him without bending one knee to the earth. But though they were eager to render him every possible homage, he made them no return of affability or good will; on the contrary he vexed, tormented, tortured, and imprisoned them; oppressed them by *corvees* and forced labours, and by his daily cruelties compelled most of them to sell what little they still possessed and seek another country. His truly diabolical spirit loved to do evil for evil's sake. He would often set his dogs to pursue poor men's cattle; would scatter the domestic flocks through the fens, would drown them in the lakes; maim them in various ways, and make them unfit for service by breaking their limbs or their backs. See Gale's Edit. i. p. 71.

† To bete thulke roberye that hym thoghte he hadde ydo. Chron. 369.

assistance in Scotland and Wales ; but at the moment his forces were sufficiently numerous to attempt the execution of his plans, he was betrayed to the Normans. Aided only by a few horsemen, he defended himself with desperate valour against a much superior body of his enemies, by whom he was attacked near the coast of the northern sea, towards which he retreated in the expectation of finding some means of escape. The rising tide having swelled a small rivulet, he was unable to proceed ; and overwhelmed by numbers, he fell. His betrayers cutting off his head carried it in triumph to the Conqueror, who, as some historians relate, wept over the fate of a man whom he loved, and whom he wished to attach to his high fortune. Such was the fate of Edwin and Morcar, the sons of Algar, and brothers-in-law to Harold. Of their sisters nothing is known, except that Lucio survived her three husbands, and that Aldith after leaving Harold at York, returned under the protection of her brothers to Chester, to spend the remainder of her days either there, or in some adjacent part of the territories of her former husband Griffith, king of North Wales. The mystery that hangs over the fate of the remains of Harold, may perhaps have arisen from his sister's residence in Chester.

Some local writers, anxious probably to promote the honour or dignity of their city, have given the names of many Earls in succession from Edol or Edolf, in or about 471, who was styled Earl by Fabian, in his chronicles. There does not appear anything in support of this opinion, but an indirect allusion to Saxon Earls in a petition to king Henry VI., four hundred years after the conquest.

William the Conqueror, averse to entrusting so vast an extent of country as the kingdom of Mercia to any one of his barons, divided that province into separate governments, corresponding in a great measure with the counties of which it was formed ; and thereby he at once destroyed that power which had so often endangered the throne, and was enabled to bestow honours and emoluments on a greater number of his followers. The city and county of Chester was given to Gherbaud, a noble Fleming who had attached himself to the fortunes of the Conqueror, and had been greatly distinguished by his bravery at the battle of Hastings, and subsequently in various encounters with the Welsh. The title of Earl of Chester was also granted to him, but not accompanied by the palatinate dignity, conferred upon his successors. In maintaining these possessions, he was exposed to great dangers from the English as well as from the Welsh, by whom he was harassed without intermission ; and, at length, wearied with

these fatigues,\* he returned to Flanders, where his property had been confided to other hands during his absence. There he was taken prisoner; and unable to return, he was obliged to relinquish his princely domains to William.

In consequence of the city and county of Chester having thus again reverted to the Conqueror, he granted them to his nephew Hugues, the son of Gosse d'Avranches, who then held the Castle of Tutbury, in Staffordshire, and was surnamed "the Wolf," better known in English History as Hugh Lupus. The dignity of the Palatinate earldom was conferred upon him, by William in person, at Malpas.† The king returned to the metropolis, and the Earl proceeded to Chester, which had fallen into the hands of the Welsh, who offered considerable resistance before they surrendered the city to its new possessor. "To him," says Pennant, "the conqueror delegated a fulness of power; made his a county Palatine, and gave it such a sovereign jurisdiction that the ancient earls kept their own parliaments, and had their own courts of law, in which any offence against the dignity of the sword of Chester, was as cognizable as the like offence would have been at Westminster against the dignity of the royal crown; for William allowed Lupus to hold this county *tam libere ad Gladium sicut ipse Rex tenebat Angliam ad Coronam*. The sword by which he was invested with this dignity is still to be seen in the British Museum, inscribed *Hugo Comes Cestrie*. Another office, inferior, though of high honour, was also held by the earls by virtue of this sword, that of sword-bearer of England at the times of coronation."

The newly appointed earl having strengthened his castle at Chester, did not long remain inactive, but with his followers commenced a vigorous warfare against the Welsh, who were very soon subdued, and the entire county of Flint annexed to that of Chester. One of his principal officers was Robert d'Avranches, long a resident in the court of Edward the Confessor, from whom he had the honour of knighthood. This Robert was in a sort of partnership with the earl, there having been granted to them the right of retaining in their own possession, all the lands they could conquer. They pursued the unfortunate Welsh with remorseless severity, driving them from

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\* *Magna ibi et difficilia tam ab Anglis quam a Guallis adversantibus pertulerat.* Orderic. Vital. 522.

† According to the Harleian Manuscript, No. 2056; but Mr. Pennant quoting from Ordericus, Lib. iv. p. 516, states the Conqueror to have been at Chester in 1069, when he restored the walls and built the castle; the former having fallen to decay since the days of Elfeda, and the latter not being sufficiently strong for the exigency of the times.

their native fastnesses; and upon Robert taking Rhuddlan, he built or re-edified a castle there, made it his residence, and changed his name to that of Robert de Rodelent, or Rhuddlan.

When Hugh had firmly established himself at Chester, he invited from Normandy one of his former friends, a relation of the name of Neal, Nigel, or Lenoir, who brought with him five brothers, among whom various distributions of land were made. To Lenoir, the earl gave the town and manor of Halton, making him his constable and hereditary marshal, or in other words, giving him the arduous duty of marching in the van of the whole army whenever the earl was at war, and that of bringing up the rear in case of a retreat. This office, nearly corresponding with the present lord lieutenant, was of great importance; for on it depended the disposal of the earl's horses, troops, and provisions, throughout the county. The recompense for this, was all the four-footed beasts that might be taken from the Welsh.\* In time of peace, Lenoir had the administration of justice within the district of Halton, and the profit of all fees and fines; the tolls of the markets, the control of the streets in, and the roads leading to Chester, during the fairs; the right of stallage and of waifs; with many other minor emoluments, including that of an entire exemption for himself and servants from all taxes and tolls, except on salt and horses. Houdard, the first of the five brothers who accompanied Lenoir, was nearly to him what Lenoir was to Lupus; he was appointed hereditary seneschal, or constable of Halton, for which he was granted the lands of Weston and Ashton; and for his share of the booty he was to receive all the bulls taken from the Welsh, together with the best ox, for his standard-bearer. Edward, the second brother, in his turn received lands in Weston from the constable, and in like manner were Volmar and Horsuin rewarded with a joint estate; while the fifth, Volfan, who was a priest, received the ancient church of Runcorn.†

These details would be unworthy of notice, did they not assist the reader in picturing to his imagination some of the various transactions attendant on the partition of the Saxon estates after the conquest. All the arrangement of interests, all the sharing of offices and properties that took place in the county of Chester, found their

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\* De præda perquisita in Wallia omnia animalia diversorum colorum inter quatuor membra. Monast. Anglic. Dugdale, ii. 187.

† Ibid, and Sir Peter Leycester, p. 351.

parallel in every province in England. When the reader may hereafter meet with the titles of count or earl,\* constable or seneschal; and when he finds mention made of the dues of manorial courts, of markets, and of tolls; of the profits of war or of justice; let him call to mind Hugues d' Avranches, his friend Lenoir, and the five brothers by whom he was accompanied; then, perhaps, he will discover a reality under these titles and offices, which if examined apart from men and transactions, would have an unfixed or doubtful character.\*

Hugh Lupus was eager to commence the exercise of his regal prerogatives, which he did by creating certain barons to form a Parliament. In the first instance, their number consisted of seven, perhaps eight, with whom were associated several ecclesiastical dignitaries. The title of the barons was taken from their chief place of residence; their appointment, which was hereditary, was highly honourable; they had considerable privileges, such as free courts of all pleas and suits; and they appear to have been amply furnished with the means of supporting their dignity and those baronial offices of state which, in imitation of other monarchs, were instituted by the Earl. These barons, though inferior in point of rank, "nay, in place beneath all knights," says Sir Peter Leycester, had great power and privileges in the county, which then may be considered to have extended over all Flintshire, and most of Denbighshire and Carnarvonshire.

First was Nigel, baron of Halton, the constable, who was in possession of twenty-seven manors. Robert de Montalt, or Mold, was appointed steward of Cheshire, and as Mold commanded one of the approaches to the city, his situation was of the first importance to the Normans, as keeping in check their ever restless and daring enemies, the Welsh. To William de Maldebeng, *Wich Malbank*, or *Nantwich*, a near relative of the earl, was Nantwich given; he fixed his barony in that town, and is recorded to have been the largest landholder in the county, having no less than forty-seven capital manors, or townships, including three-fourths of the land in the hundred. His son gave one-fourth of Nantwich for the endowment of the abbey of Combermere, which he founded; in default of heirs male the remainder became much divided, but the greater part is now inherited by the Marquis Cholmondeley and Lord Crewe.

\* Robert Fitzhugh, baron of Malpas, supposed to have been a natural son of the

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\* See the termination of the Fifth Book of Thierry's Norman Conquest.

earl, had thirty-one townships given to him; in one of which, Malpas, he built a castle, the keep of which still remains. The barons of this place had, in common with other powers, that of life and death in their courts; but it would appear they were more particular in exercising its privileges than the other nobles, as several instances occur, after the barony had been divided into moieties, and even into *quarters*, in which the heads of felons executed by the holders of these shares, were presented at the castle of Chester, to enable their several sergeants to obtain the *rudynge* (riding) fee.

Richard de Vernon, baron of Shipbrook, also largely participated in the bounty of the Earl, having had seventeen manors allotted to him. The fifth baron dying without issue male, the estates passed, by the marriage of his three coheiresses, to the families of Wilbraham, Stafford, and Littlebury. But half of the baronial manors, including Shipbrook the seat of the barony, was awarded, after a long legal contest, to the uncle of the three ladies; this estate was then settled by deed on his illegitimate son, Sir Ralph,\* who lived to the extraordinary age of one hundred and fifty years, as appears from subsequent law proceedings relative to the Vernon properties.

Hamon, the first baron of Dunham Massie, in the time of Hugh Lupus, held his barony from the Earl by military service, being bound to attend the king in time of war with a certain number of horse and foot, and to bring out his entire forces immediately, should the city be attacked or the county invaded.

Guilbert de Venables, a younger brother of the celebrated Stephen Earl de Blois, was appointed baron of Kinderton, and had, annexed to his dignity, upwards of thirty-seven townships, which are enumerated in the *Harl. MSS.*, No. 1967. The power of capital punishment was exercised by the barons of Kinderton so lately as 1597, when one Hugh Stringer was tried for murder in the court-baron, convicted, and executed.

To these seven many would add the barony of Stockport, a claim which has been the subject of much dispute among antiquaries. Sir Peter Leycester doubts whether he was one of the ancient barons—as asserted by Spelman, Camden, and others,—considering the arms of the ancient barons that appear in the Exchequer chamber at Chester to have been of very modern origin. The learned authors of the *Magna Britannia*, in endeavouring to reconcile the difference, suggest that a baron of Stock-

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\* Harl. MSS. No. 2079, pp. 124 and 132. In the pedigrees of the family he is termed "Sir Ralph the Olde," and "The Olde Liver." See Lyson's *Mag. Britt.* art. "Shipbrooke."

port was subsequently called to the palatinate parliament, and that therefore, although at first there were only seven, yet afterwards there were eight lay barons. Unquestionably the baron of Stockport did not exercise, or even claim, the powers that were held by the other barons; for in the records of the reign of Henry III. and Edward II. Stockport is only called a manor, not a lordship; and in Henry VII., the proprietor of the lordship or manor, in the plea to a *quo warranto*, claimed the privilege of punishing minor offenders only.

It is most probable there were other barons, that formed part of the parliament of the Earl; and there can be little hesitation in placing among them the commander of his forces, his cousin and favourite, Robert de Rodelent, who had annexed so much of North Wales to the county of Chester. Those enumerated are they, who by their heirs and their posterity, were certainly known for a long period as barons of the Earl of Chester. But Rodelent had no son to succeed to his honours; and he died at an early period. This important personage is described as being "a valiant and active soldier, eloquent, liberal, and commendable for many virtues; but of a stern countenance." His piety is instanced by giving to the monks of Uttica, in Normandy, the church of Telliolis, with the tithe of his mills and lands, and all the *beer in his cellars*. He also gave them certain lands in England, the church of Cumbivel; the town, tithe and church of West Kirby, and the church of the Island, most probably the cell or chantry of Hilbre Island,\* and the church of St. Peter in Chester. After the death of the Confessor, he went to Normandy, but returned with the Conqueror; and when Hugh was appointed Earl of Chester, Robert was made commander-in-chief of his forces, and governor of the county. To him was also given the newly built castle of Rhuddlan, from whence he had many skirmishes with the Welsh, to whom he proved a dreadful enemy. He rebuilt the castle of Deganwy, Dinas Gonway, or the fort of the Conway close to the Sea, and his name became a terror to the Britons. But at length, on the 3rd of July, 1088, Griffith, king of Wales, having landed with a strong force, pillaged the surrounding country, and was reembarking his men with their plunder before Robert was aware of the fact. In his anxiety to arrest their progress, he hastened to the sea side attended by a single soldier. Availing themselves of his imprudence, the

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\* Dedit Sancto Ebrulfo Cherchebiam cum duabus Ecclesiis, unam scilicet quæ in ipsa villa est, et aliam prope illum manerium, in insula maris. Order. Vital. 602.



Welsh attacked him, and he fell beneath a shower of arrows; "for none dared personally to approach him with their sword;" and his head was instantly cut off, and taken to their ships, before the soldiers whom his zeal had so far outstripped could come to his rescue. His body was conveyed to the monastery of St. Warburgh, at Chester, and there interred, according to Ordericus, "amid the lamentations of both English and Normans." See Vital. 670 and 671.

There were also several ecclesiastics in the Earl's parliament, who assisted in the deliberations upon spiritual affairs. Their exact number is not known, but most probably it was no less than that of the temporal barons.

First among them was the Bishop of Chester;\* and, next in order, the Bishop of Bangor, whose diocese comprehended the Welsh lands conquered by Robert de Rodelent, extending from Chester to the Straits of Menai. The seal of *Hervei Episcopi* of Bangor is attached to the foundation charter of the monastery of St. Warburgh. The Abbot of Chester is always mentioned as the third spiritual peer; the others following in the order of the foundation of their respective monasteries. They consisted of the Abbot of Norton, founded on the removal of the monks from Runcorn, in the reign of king Stephen, who died in 1134, and that of Combermere, founded in 1130. The foundation of the priory of Birkenhead is more uncertain; but for reasons that will be mentioned in treating of that town, it is probable it was anterior to that of Stanlaw, founded in 1178. To these seven there is added by several writers upon this subject, an eighth,† the Abbot of Vale Royal; but this is undoubtedly an error, for it was not until after king Edward I., had become possessed of the estate of Darnhall, that he granted it to the monks of Done Abbey, in Herefordshire, for whom he afterwards built the Abbey of Vale Royal, on the banks of the Weaver; the first stone of which was laid by queen Eleanor, in 1277, though the works were of such magnitude that they were not completed till 1330, a temporary erection having been used in the intermediate time. There is evidence of the ceremonies used at the commencement of the building of this magnificent Abbey in the *Chronicle of Vale Royal*, and of the

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\* Peter, bishop of Lichfield, A. D. 1075, removed his seat from Lichfield to Chester, and was thenceforward commonly styled Bishop of Chester.

† Now although the two bishops, in addition to the six abbots, were not all extant at the time of the first Earl, yet before the decease of Ranulph, the second of that name, earl of Chester, they were all, viz. the eight above named, fixed in their *pontificalibus*. Hemingway's Chester, i. p. 111.

unequalled influx of visitors at its completion, so abundant as to place the date beyond all dispute; yet forty years before one single stone of the edifice had been laid, the Earldom of Chester had fallen into the hands of the king, on the death of John the Scot, eighth and last Earl, in June 1237. It is, therefore, impossible that the Abbot of Vale Royal could have formed one of the Barons' parliament.

At the period of the Conquest, the building of churches and the endowment of religious establishments were considered equal, if not superior, to all other christian virtues, and as such infallibly leading to eternal happiness; and by no class of people was this belief more firmly maintained than the Normans. It will be found that in almost every instance as they saw their end approaching, or were seized with sickness, they appeared desirous to make some commutation for their past crimes. Such appears to have been the conduct of Hugh Lupus. For centuries previous to his acquiring the earldom, an establishment for Nuns is supposed to have existed at Chester, originally founded by Wulpherus, king of the Mercians, in honour of his daughter Warburgh,\* who subsequently was canonized as the patron saint of that city. Though her history is involved in great obscurity, and much uncertainty exists as to the Nunnery, there can be little doubt that about the year 870 there was a monastery in Chester, to which her reliques were removed, in order to preserve them from pollution by the Danes. Numerous and minute are the traditions and details of the miracles performed at her tomb; the mere mention of one noticed by Henry Bradshaw the monk, in his "Life of St. Warburgh," who therein narrates that an entire army of Welshmen, under Griffyn king of Wales, were struck with blindness, by the exhibition of her shrine on the walls of the city, will be a sufficient excuse for omitting others.

A charter is yet extant from Edgar, dated 959, in which, for the alleged benefit or good health of the souls of his deceased father and uncle, that monarch bequeathed eighteen houses, in various places, to this convent. It was rebuilt by Ethelfleda the *Ladye of Mercia*, until whose time it had been dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul; but she transferred its patronage to the Virgin Mary and St. Oswald. The Nuns remained in possession of the convent until the reign of Athelstane, when they were dispossessed, and canons secular introduced in their place. These continued until the

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\* William of Malmesbury distinctly says, "That the Father of Warburgh, perceiving her attachment to a religious life, caused her to take the veil, and built the Convent for her and such other pious Ladies as would join her in dedicating their lives to serving God therein."

Earl Hugh, in the sixth year of the reign of William Rufus, expelled them. He transferred their possessions to the regular monks of the order of St. Benedict, having invited the celebrated Anselm, then abbot of Bec, from Normandy, to assist him in the foundation. The original charter of Hugh Lupus containing the endowment of this celebrated monastery, is still in existence, in possession of the Marquis of Westminster, at Eaton. The Earl was at this period, 1093, suffering from sickness, the severity of which, it may not be uncharitable to infer, regulated his donations. Magnificent indeed were the endowments he conferred on the abbey; they were followed by donations from numerous benefactors, who were actuated by the religious feeling that then so generally prevailed. Most of the expelled secular canons were appointed regular monks. The nomination of the abbey having been given by Hugh Lupus to Anselm, he appointed Richard, his own chaplain, the first abbot; Anselm being in the same year translated to the archbishopric of Canterbury, where he died in 1105.

The endowments of the abbey were upon a scale commensurate with the munificence exhibited by the Earl in all religious affairs. In the foundation charter referred to, after enumerating fourteen large townships in different parts of the county, various manors in Wales, grants of detached lands, tithes of corn and of fish, mills, fisheries and other properties, given by him, with a number of other endowments from his barons and knights, he permits them to dispose of their bodies and to have sepulture therein, and to give one-third part of their goods, and a similar permission is given to all burgesses and freemen; the toll, and all the profits of the fair at the feast of St. Warburgh, for three days, is also given to the abbot; and he orders that for all forfeitures in the fair, trial shall be had in the court of the Saint, and all such forfeitures and fees be for the benefit of the monks. And he also granted, that whatever thief or malefactor went to the solemnity should not be attacked while he continued there, provided he committed no new offence in the city.

This latter privilege he afterwards greatly extended; for in the devastations attendant upon the war that had ranged throughout his dominions, depopulation was a natural result; and he was anxious to supply that which is not, indeed, the ornament or the splendour, but the positive basis of every state. "Romulus," says the enthusiastic Dr. Gower, "in order to furnish his new city with inhabitants, opened an asylum for the fugitives of all nations. Lupus did the same; but as his territories were much more extensive than even those of the *Empress of the world*, in her earlier days, he

opened three asylums instead of one: two of them near the confines of Wales, where the addition of every single subject added a double portion of domestic strength; and a third was in the centre of his dominions. Mr. Pennant, in his "Tour" of 1772, says, "About two miles from Chester, we passed over Hoole heath, noted for having been one of the places of reception for strangers established by Hugh Lupus, in order to people his new dominions. This in particular was the asylum allotted for the fugitives of Wales, and in its results it exceeded the warmest expectations of this politic earl. Numbers of the discontented noblesse of my ancient county resorted there, made alliances with the victorious Normans and conquered Saxons, which sublimed the race into that degree of valour, that in after times gave to the men of Cheshire the distinguishing title of 'chief of men,' and made its land the very seed plot of gentility." In a return to an inquisition ordered by Edward II., relative to Hoole heath, it is certified that "a certain large piece of waste was in ancient times ordained for strangers of what country soever, and assigned to such as came to the peace of the earl of Chester or to his aid, resorting there to form dwellings, but without building any fixed houses by the means of nails or pins, save only booths and tents to dwell in;" and there are similar returns as to the other two asylums.

Hugh Lupus died in 1101, having, it is said, previously become a monk; and his bones were transferred from the burial ground of the monastery to the chapter-house, by his nephew Randal, the first earl of that name. About a century since a stone coffin was found, having a wolf's head erased, enclosing the remains of a human body wrapped in gilt leather. The crest led many to believe it was the body of Lupus the Wolf; but the initials "R.S." would tend to a different opinion. At the same time were found several other coffins, containing, as it is supposed, the remains of various earls, their countesses, and the ancient abbots; but time had done its office,—they were reduced to indistinguishable dust.

Historians differ much as to the character of earl Lupus; by some he is described as possessing every virtue, by others as exercising every vice. According to Ordericus, in the fourth book of his *Eccles. Hist.*, "He was not abundantly liberal, but profusely prodigal, and carried not so much a family as an army still along with him. He daily wasted his estate; and delighted more in falconers and huntsmen than in the tillers of his lands, or heaven's orators, the ministers. He was much given to eating, whereby he grew so fat that he could scarcely crawl. He had many natural sons and

daughters, but they were almost all swept away by sundry misfortunes." Lib. iv. p. 522.

The Welsh, probably smarting under the severities he had inflicted upon them, invariably call him Hugh Fras, Hugh the Fat, or Hugh Dirgane, which signifies Hugh the Gross, on account of his great corpulency, which among warlike nations is generally regarded with contempt or aversion. Upon one point all writers agree, namely, his great exertions to consolidate his power, and to increase his enormous wealth and possessions, and in this he was eminently successful. His demesnes in Normandy were very extensive; all the county of Chester, except a small portion belonging to the Bishop, was held by him or his tenants, forty-eight townships being in his own personal possession; and by Domesday Book he appears to have had lands in no less than nineteen different counties.

That in his early days he was a brave, active, and prudent prince, is clearly authenticated, not only by the choice made of him for so high a station by his politic uncle, the Conqueror, but by the general character of his government; and this is perfectly consistent with his having, toward the close of his life, sunk into a state of criminal and excessive voluptuousness. He must certainly have possessed great strength, for his sword, now in the British Museum, the blade of which is four feet long, is so weighty as to require both hands of a strong man to wield it. In an ancient manuscript poem, quoted in "Willis's Cathedrals," he is described as

"Hugh Lupo by name,  
Sunne to the Duke of Brittagne,  
Of Chivalrie then being flower,  
And sister's sunne to William Conquerour."

During the life of the earl Hugh, Chester carried on a considerable traffic, which is related by many writers, one of whom, LUCIAN a monk, is quoted by Camden as being "a rare author, that lived a little after the conquest." Lucian says, "Chester is built as a city, the site whereof inviteth and allureth the eye; which being situate in the west parts of Britain was in times past a place of receipt to the legions coming afar off to repose themselves, and served sufficiently to keep the keys, as I may say, of Ireland, for the Romans to preserve the limits of their empire; for being opposite to the north-east part of Ireland, it openeth the way for passage of ships and mariners with spread sails, passing, not often but continually, to and fro; as also for the commodities of sundry sorts of merchandize. Which city having four gates, from the four cardinal winds; on the east side hath a prospect toward *India*; on the west toward *Ireland*;

north-eastward the greater *Norway* ; and southward that great and narrow *Angle* which divine severity, by reason of civil and home discords, hath left unto the Britons, which long since by their bitter variance, have caused the name of Britain to be changed into the name of England. Over and beside, Chester hath by God's gift a river to enrich and adorn it, the same fair and fishful, hard by the city walls, and on the south side a road and harbour for ships coming from Gascony, Spain, Germany, and Ireland, which with the help and direction of Christ, by the labour and wisdom of merchants repair and refresh the heart of the city with many good things, that we being comforted every way by our God's grace, may also drink wine *often, more frankly and more pleasantly*, because those countries enjoy the fruits of the vineyards abundantly. Moreover the open sea ceaseth not to visit us every day with a tide, which according as the broad shelves and bars of sands are opened or hidden by tides and ebbs incessantly, is wont, more or less, either to send or exchange one thing or other, and by this reciprocal flow and return, either to bring in or carry out somewhat."

The learned monk then proceeds to speak of the inhabitants of Cheshire, whom he describes as being "found to be partly different to the rest of the English, partly better, and partly equal unto them. But they seem, especially (the best point to be considered in a general trial of manners) in feasting, friendly ; at meat, cheerful ; in giving entertainments, liberal ; soon angry, but not much, and as soon pacified ; lavish in words ; impatient of servitude ; merciful to the afflicted ; compassionate to the poor ; kind to their kindred ; sparing of their labour ; void of dissimulation and doubleness of heart ; nothing greedy in eating ; far from dangerous practices ; yet by a certain licentious liberty, bold in borrowing many times other men's goods. Chester itself is a place of receipt for the Irish, a neighbour to the Welsh, and plentifully supplied with corn by the English ; finely seated with gates, anciently built, approved in hard and dangerous difficulties."

Spices and other luxuries from the East, wine from France and Spain, cloth from Flanders, and linen from Germany, then formed the staple article of import into the city, to which also must be added armour, reliques, ecclesiastical vestments. The exports consisted of lead, copper, hides, horns, pearls, cheese, for which this county was celebrated from the time of the Romans, but above all for horses and slaves. To this traffic the Saxons were much addicted ; the frequent wars with the Welsh, and the peculiar situation of the city, caused it greatly to flourish in Chester, which was

the great mart for the sale of captured prisoners. Henry Bradshaw in his "Life of St. Warburgh," alluding to the trade of Chester, says,

"There is great Merchandise, Shippes, and Wygnes strong,  
With all things of Pleasure the Cittizens among."

Hugh Lupus was succeeded by his only legitimate son, Richard, who was only seven years old at the death of his father. Our local historians generally state they have been unable to discover in what manner the government of the palatinate was conducted between the death of Lupus and the accession of Randal, the fourth earl, but it would appear Richard was under the guardianship of his mother, for in May, 1106, a grant was made by him of the manor of Wudmunsley, to the monastery of Abingdon, by the advice and consent of his mother, and conveyed under her seal. The young earl married Maude, the daughter of Stephen de Blois, son-in-law of the Conqueror, but within a few short weeks after his marriage, in returning to England with his bride, both were drowned, together with two sons and one daughter of the king, and many of the principal nobles of Normandy, of whom upwards of one hundred and sixty are enumerated.

The following is abbreviated from Ordericus: "Peace having been restored, king Henry made preparations for crossing the channel to England, in the beginning of the winter of 1120, taking with him his son William, several of his natural children, and many of the great barons. The fleet assembled in December, at the port of Barfleur, and when all was ready for embarkation, Thomas the son of Stephen, a famous mariner, the master of a new ship, came to king Henry the first, and offered him a mark of gold, in those days valued at six pounds in silver, or as others say ten marks in silver, (£6 13s. 4d.) desiring that as Stephen his father had transported the Conqueror when he went against king Harold in England, and was his constant mariner in all his passages between England and Normandy, so that he himself likewise might now have the transportation of king Henry with all his attendants, as it were in fee, for he had a very good ship called the *Candida Navis*, or the white ship, well furnished for the purpose. The king thanked him, but having made choice of another ship would not change; yet he commended him to his two sons William and Richard, and others of the great nobility, by whom the vessel of Thomas was hired, and great store of provision placed therein, whereat the mariners much rejoiced.

"The ship which carried the king set sail with a south wind, and safely landed him next morning; but the other gallant barque did not leave till later in the day; the

princely retinue and mariners having spent much time in feasting, and many of the crew having been abundantly treated by the nobles, and especially by the prince, who gave them three hogsheads of wine, were at their departure in a state of intoxication. Thomas, the master, was at the helm, and the mariners, stimulated by the wine, gave way and pulled stoutly at the oars so as to come up with the king's ship, when suddenly they got entangled among some rocks, and the side of the vessel was stove in; immediately afterwards she went down, with nearly three hundred persons, including eighteen noble ladies, who were all drowned,\* except one Berauld, a butcher of Rouen in Normandy, who was picked up the next morning by some fishermen, taken into their boat, and with much difficulty recovered."

The ancient writers regard this awful event with much complacency, they have no compassion for the distress that was thus extended into almost every Norman family; they call this misfortune "a divine vengeance," "a judgment of God," and dwell with the greatest satisfaction on the idea of there being something supernatural in the shipwreck occurring in calm weather on a tranquil sea. William, the legitimate heir of Henry, was known to have inherited the bitterest spirit of animosity against the Anglo-Saxons, and had been heard publicly to declare, that if ever he came to reign over the miserable remnant of that people he would yoke them, like oxen, to the plough.† And his threat was remembered when it could not be accomplished. The chroniclers glory over the destruction of the man that avowed his antipathy to their countrymen. "The proud youth!" exclaims Henry of Huntingdon, "he thought of his future reign; but God said, it shall not be so, thou impious man, it shall not be so: and it has come to pass that his brow, instead of being encircled by the crown of gold, has been dashed against the rocks of the ocean. (ii. 696) It was God himself who so ordered that the son of the Norman should not again see England."‡

Thus perished Richard, the third Norman palatinate earl of Chester, in the twenty-first year of his age. During the earldom of his successor, Randal, surnamed de Meschines, which lasted eight years, no events of importance occurred. He married Lucio, countess of Lincoln, sister of the two great chiefs Edwin and Morcar;

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\* See Order. Vital. lib. xii. pp. 848 to 870; and Wilhelm. Gemet. Hist. Norm. p. 257.

† *Palam comminatus fuerat Anglis quod si quando acciperet dominium super eos quasi boves ad aratrum trahere faceret.* Henry Knyghton, ii. col. 2382. Chron. J. Bromton, i. 1013. And a host of other authorities.

‡ ——— obstitit ipse Deus. Chron. J. Brompton, i. col. 1013. Selden's edition.



by her he had several children. She had previously had two husbands, and succeeded to the estates and possessions of the second: but it would appear she was not partial to a married life, for she paid a fine or fee of five hundred marks that she might not be compelled to marry again within five years. Of Randal, peaceful in his disposition and domestic in his habits, not one incident is recorded worthy of notice, except that, according to the fashion of the times, he was a liberal contributor to the church: his widow also, after his decease, founded several priories.

Randal the second, surnamed Gernons, from the place of his birth in Normandy, succeeded on the death of his father, in 1128. He was of a very ambitious disposition, and, living in times when great political contentions prevailed, he makes a conspicuous figure in the history of that period, when he was one of the most powerful nobles in the kingdom, possessing immense estates, not only in England but in Normandy. "He made many most notable stirs in the nation." He was the greatest warrior of the day, and joint leader with the earl of Gloucester, in their war, or rather rebellion against king Stephen, which ended in the capture and imprisonment of the monarch.

The old historians have given most elaborate details of the military proceedings of this influential baron, who is described by Baldwin de Clare, one of the leaders of Stephen, in an oration which, according to the customs of that day, he made to the troops immediately before the battle of Lincoln, as "a man audacious, but without judgement; heady to plot a treason, but still wavering in the pursuit of it; ready to run into battle, but uncircumspect of any danger; aiming beyond his reach, and conceiting things merely impossible, and therefore hath but few with him that know him; leading only a rout of vagrant and tumultuous peasants; so there is nothing in him to be feared, for whatsoever he begins like a man he ends like a woman; unfortunate in all his undertakings, in his encounters he hath either been vanquished, or if by chance he rarely obtain a victory, it is with greater loss on his part than on the conquered."\*

The result of the conflict was very different to the anticipations of the warlike orator, whose heroic conduct, though especially noticed by Ordericus, who lived at that period, could not protect the sovereign, who was taken prisoner, but afterwards released in exchange for the earl of Gloucester, who had fallen into the hands of the king's

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\* Polychronicon, i. c. 19; and Monasticon, i. 890.

party. During the remaining years of the life of Randal he was engaged in a variety of contests with Stephen, with varying success; at one time victorious, at another, flying for safety through every part of the kingdom, one third of which belonged to him.

The continued absence of Randal from Chester, and the large bodies of troops drawn from the county, afforded the Welsh an opportunity of again invading his territories, of which they availed themselves, "making great store of spoil and devastation,\*" and ravaging the country as far as Nantwich.

The earl died in 1152 or 1153, for there are many authorities for both, and his death is generally attributed to poison. Immediately previously to his demise he gave to the monastery of St. Warburgh at Chester, in satisfaction for the ills he had done to the monks, the manors and churches of Eastham and Bromborough. He had been a liberal benefactor to the church, and had founded several religious houses; but this latter gift does not appear to have satisfied the feelings of his widow and his son, Hugh, for soon after his decease they gave the manor of Styshall and other lands in Warwick, to Walter, Bishop of Lichfield, by whom the sentence of excommunication had been pronounced against the earl, in order that the ban might be withdrawn.

Hugh the second, surnamed Cyveliock, from being born in the province of that name, situated in Powys, succeeded his father: he is represented as being in fortitude and valour not unlike him, but greatly his inferior in wisdom and the government of his own passions. When the son of Henry II. took up arms against his father, he was assisted by earl Hugh, who encountered the king on several occasions, but was finally taken prisoner; after being confined for some time he purchased his liberty, and was restored to his earldom, "when," says Webb, "being taught by his folly to be more wise, he retired to Chester, and lived peaceably and prosperously until his death, in 1181, when he was buried at Chester.

Randall the third, surnamed Blundeville, succeeded his father, and held the earldom for the long period of fifty-one years. All writers agree in representing him as the most distinguished of the palatinate earls, not only for prowess, then considered the first in rank of all the cardinal virtues, but for wisdom and prudence: he was the principal adviser and counsellor of four English monarchs, Henry II, Richard I, John,

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\* Henry Huntingdon, lib. i. p. 8.

and the third Henry.\* His benevolence acquired for him the title of Randal the good, but the cloud of superstition which darkened the horizon of those days, overshadowed the native goodness of the Earl's disposition, and at an advanced period of his life, he entered the lists of the Crusaders with a fury and fervour that fanaticism alone could inspire. Upon his return from Palestine he built the Castles of Beeston, and Chartley ; to defray the expence of which, according to Higden, he levied a "toll throughout all his lordships, upon all such persons as passed by the same with any cattle, chaffre, or merchandize." The stately ruins which yet remain of Beeston Castle, the impregnable strength of which was formerly proverbial, sufficiently attest its magnificence, placed on the summit of an almost perpendicular hill, it forms an interesting object in the scenery of a large surrounding district. Beeston Castle was made the depot for the treasures of Richard, and though in Leland's time it is described by him as being in ruins, it was subsequently repaired, and garrisoned for the Roundheads. During the civil wars, it was taken by that celebrated partisan of royalty "Thomas Sandford, Captain of Firelocks ;" soon after Chester was taken in 1646 Beeston Castle was dismantled, and has since been gradually declining into the beautiful ruins it now presents.

The site of the castle having been alienated from the earldom by Elizabeth, was granted to Sir Christopher Hatton, from whom it passed by purchase to the Beestons ; whose property descended by marriage to the Mostyns. There has long been a traditionary belief among the peasantry that this ancient castle will at some period assume its pristine glory. To this supposed restoration Leland alludes in the following lines, which Bishop Gibson, in his edition of Camden, has translated as subjoined.

Assyrio redeuns Victor Ranulphus ab orbe,  
Hoc posuit castrum, terrorum gentibus olim  
Vicinis, patriæque suæ memoriabile vallum  
Nunc licet indignas patiatur fracta ruinas

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\* Giraldus Cambriensis, who visited Chester in company with the Archbishop Baldwin, gives the following important information relative to the wife of Randal: "she was Constance, the widow of Geoffrey fourth son of Henry II, and daughter of Conan king of Little Britain, and earl of Richmond. In 1187, two years after her marriage, Giraldus states that "Constance, Countess of Chester, kept a herd of milch hinds, made cheese of their milk, and presented three to the Archbishop. Among other strange syghtes, he saw an animal there, the compound of an ox and a stag ; also a woman born without arms, who could sew with her feet as well as others of her sex with their fingers ; and finally that he heard of a litter of whelps begotten by a monkey."

*Tempus erit quando rursus caput exeret altum  
Vatibus antiquis si fas sit mihi credere vati.*

Randal returning from the Syrian land  
This castle raised, this county to defend,  
The borderer to fright, and to command.  
Though ruined here the stately fabric lies,  
Yet, with new glories it again shall rise,  
If I, a prophet, may believe old prophecies.

The Castle and Village of Beeston, with much of the surrounding neighbourhood have been purchased within the last three years by John Tollemache, Esq. Member for the southern division of the County, whose splendid improvements and buildings, already promise a realization of the prophecies of the old historian.

Randal was undoubtedly the first subject in the kingdom, holding, by inheritance, the two great Earldoms of Chester and Lincoln, and enjoying, in right of his wife, the vast estates attached to that of Richmond, and the honour of Brittany.\* He also held, at the same time, the important offices of Sheriff of the counties of Stafford, Salop, and Lancaster, for several years, during which the duties were performed by his deputies. In the two former, he had considerable hereditary possessions; and in or about 1230, he purchased all the lands in Lancashire belonging to Roger de Mersey,† which then extended from the Mersey to the Ribble.

The immense power and resources of this great Baron, enabled him to occupy a position of the most distinguished pre-eminence, during the long period that he held the palatinate earldom, over which, with sovereign sway, he reigned the sole and uncontrolled monarch. He acknowledged no superior when the wishes of his paramount lord were contrary to the maxims of sound policy, or to those dictates of natural justice which a wise and virtuous prince always owes to a faithful and obedient people.

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\* The Earl had assumed the style of Duke of Brittany and Earl of Richmond on his marriage with the Lady Constance, but he relinquished those titles on being divorced in 1200; the profits of the Honour of Brittany in the counties of Cambridge, Norfolk, and Suffolk, were subsequently confirmed to him by Henry III.

† This Roger is erroneously called "of Poitiers" or Poitou by most writers upon Lancashire. In the agreement for the purchase of these lands he is distinctly described as "Rogerum de Maressey," and the deed conveying the same, commences "Rogerus Filius Ranulfi de Maresheya, Salutem," &c. See the Couchir book for the Duchy of Lancaster, vol. i. fol. 77, numbers 70 and 79.

Of this, several instances are recorded, from which the following may be selected. Upon the return of the young King, Henry III., from France, in 1231, he demanded and obtained a scutage from his parliament; but in the following year, Mathew Paris says, "he was not so fortunate; for in the parliament assembled at London, the King demanded money for the discharge of his debts occasioned by the wars. The Earl of Chester, answering for the nobility of the country, told him that the Earls, Barons, and Knights, which held of him *in capite*, were personally with him in the service, and had expended much of their own money in that service, and therefore ought not to pay anything; and so nothing was granted." p. 372. And when Henry III. issued his imperial mandate for the collection of the tax, commonly called *Peter's pence*, through the whole extent of his dominions, the Cestrian Monarch not only forbade its collection within the bounds of his own territories, but threatened the collectors with punishment if they dared to attempt it. "Randal or Ranulph the third," says Smith in his *Vale Royal*, "was very well learned, especially in the laws of the realm, inso-much that *he compiled a book thereof*. For we read, that when the Pope sent his collectors throughout Christendom to gather up his tenths, he alone refused to pay any, suffering none in his dominions, either layman or clerk, to yield any tenths to the Pope's proctors; although all England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, paid it." Webb, in his portion of the *Vale Royal*, has fallen into an error, similar to that of his colleague, when he says, "as also he left no mean glory behind him in his excellent parts of wisdom and knowledge that was in him, having *compiled a book* of the laws of the realm with great judgement, to show his studious inclination to all virtues requisite in an absolute government."

But the learned antiquaries are both mistaken as to the identity of the parties. Following the example originally set by Bale, and from him adopted by Pitseus,\* they have confounded the name of Randal Glanville, with that of Randal Blundeville. The Earl of Chester was no author; but the book of Glanville, Chief Justice of England, "*De Legibus Angliæ*," is well known as a work of authority upon the ancient laws and customs of England. Glanville, who was Chief Justice in the reign of

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\* "Ranulphus de Glanvyle Cestrie Comes, vir nobilissimi generis et in utroque jure eruditus," &c. Bale de Script-  
oribus Britannicis, c. iii. no. 93. "Ranulfus Glanvillus ex Splendissima familia Cestrie Comitum in Anglia natus," &c.  
See Pitseus de illustribus Angliæ Scriptoribus.

Henry II., and died at the siege of Accon, in 1190, was not in any manner connected with the family of the Earls of Chester.

After having held the Earldom for the long period of fifty-one years, the earthly career of this distinguished Earl was terminated in 1232, at Wallingford; from whence his remains were removed for interment to Chester.\* Not having any issue by either of his wives, his immense possessions were divided among his four sisters, the eldest of whom, Maude, having been married to David, Earl of Huntingdon, brother to the King of Scotland, had a son John, surnamed the Scot, who succeeded to the Earldom.

No portion of the life of the great Earl Randal, appears to have been spent in inactivity; nothing was so great or difficult that he would not attempt its accomplishment, if the glory or interest of his country required; nothing was so trivial as to be neglected, if it would promote the welfare of his own palatinate. In his victories in Brittany and Anjou, his exploits in Normandy, his government in Cheshire,—in all, he was guided by feelings of the purest patriotism.

The frequent wars he was engaged in, made him anxious to increase the population of Cheshire, that he might be able to keep up his levies from among the “chief of men;” and that he was especially desirous to benefit the citizens of Chester, is proved by the great attention he paid to their civic and municipal interests. Three Charters granted by the Earl are yet in existence in Chester, which city probably can boast of a more ancient, more numerous, and better arranged collection of records, than any other in the kingdom: of the first of these the following is a translation:—

“RANDAL, Earl of Chester, to his constable and dapifer,† justice and sheriff, and all his barons and bailiffs, and all his men, French as well as English, future as present, greeting: Be it known to you all, that I have given and granted, and by present charter have confirmed to my citizens of Chester, their guild mercatory, with all liberties and free customs, which they ever better, freely and quietly have had in the times of my ancestors in the aforesaid guild. And I prohibit, on the forfeiture to me of ten pounds, if any one shall disturb them; which these witnesseth, Roger, constable

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\* Or rather his body, for his heart was conveyed in great state to the Abbey of Dieulacres; and his bowels were interred at Wallingford. See Dugdale's Baronage, i. 32.

† Or, High Steward of his household.

of Chester; Ralph de Montealte, steward of Chester; William and Robert Patrick, Philip de Orreby, Richard and William de Boidele, Richard Phitton, Luilph de Twamlow, Rauno de Davenham, Warin de Vernon, Robert, the son of the fisher, Peter the clerk, the fisher Herbert of Pulford, William de Vernon, Thomas the clerk, and many others; and written in the presence of the Earl, at Chester," but not dated.

A second Charter of much greater length, also without date, was granted to the citizens by the Earl, confirming all their previous rights; and declaring, that if any citizen "should die, his testaments, reasonably made, may be good in law, and firm, wheresoever he may die. And that if any citizen shall make any purchase in open day, and before witnesses, and suit shall afterwards come from a Frenchman or an Englishman, who can reasonably challenge the thing bought, the citizen who shall have made that purchase shall be quit of me and my bailiffs, by losing so much only and restoring what he shall have bought, if he cannot otherwise satisfy the challenge; but if suit shall arise from a Welchman, who can reasonably challenge the price of the thing bought, he may give back to the citizen what the same citizen shall be reasonably able to shew that he gave for the thing bought. And that if a citizen in the aforesaid city shall have lent to any one his chattels, it may be lawful for him to take surety in the city for the recovery of his chattels, without license or demand from my sheriff or other bailiff. And if any citizens of the aforesaid city in my service, shall be slain, it shall be done with his chattels as if he should have made a reasonable testament."

And a third Charter declares that no one may buy or sell any kind of Merchandise which shall come to the city of Chester, by sea or land, but the citizens, or their heirs, or by their favour, unless at the fairs appointed on the nativity of St. John the Baptist, and on the feast of St. Michael.\* This Charter is also without date; the witnesses are very numerous, including, in addition to those attached to the former grants, the Abbot, "Master Hugh," and others.

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\* Though these privileges do not now appear to be of much importance, they were then of great value; as under the Norman system in almost every case, such property would have reverted to the feudal lord. The rule as to the restitution of stolen property seems to be shortly this, that for whatever had belonged to a Welshman, he must pay the citizen what he had given for it; while the Englishman or Frenchman had his restored to him without payment. The translation of these charters first appeared in Mr. Hemingway's "History of the City of Chester;" a gentleman that was the first to point out the error referred to in the following page.

These Charters are all without date, a circumstance that has led every historian of Cheshire, except Hemingway, into a gross error. They were originally attributed by Webb to Randal, the first of the name, third Earl of Chester; in this, Webb was followed by the Messrs. Lysons, in their *Magna Britannia*, Dr. Pigot, Mr. Henshall, and by several others, including even Dr. Ormerod. It is the more surprising that Dr. Ormerod should have fallen into such an error as this, for his own pages supply most ample evidence to prove from the attesting witnesses that these Charters were granted by Randal the third, seventh earl of Chester. The first Randal died in 1128, having held the earldom eight years, during which time William, the son of Nigel, first baron of Halton, was constable of Chester. Upon the death of John, sixth baron of Halton, who held the barony several years before Randal was earl, he was succeeded by his son Roger, who from that time, 1190, remained constable, until his death in 1211, when he was followed by John who held the office at the extinction of the earldom on the death of John the Scot, in 1236. As there was no other Roger at any time constable of Chester, than this seventh Baron of Halton, it is evident the first and second Charters were granted during the time he held that office, namely between the years 1190 and 1211, and consequently, by the third Randal, and not by the first, who died at least sixty-six years before : and further as the first witness to the third Charter was "HUGONE, Abbate Sanctæ Werburgæ Cestriæ," followed by "PHILLIPO de ORREBY, tunc temporis, Justiciario Cestriæ;" and as the first of these functionaries, Hugh Grylle, succeeded to the Abbacy on the death of Geoffrey in 1208, and was buried in the Chapter-house in 1226; it is equally clear that this charter must have been granted between the years 1208, when he became Abbot, and 1211, when Roger died. Phillip de Orreby succeeded Ralph Mainwaring as Chief Justice of Chester, in 1208 or 1209, and he held the office thence until 1229,—an additional proof that the third could not have been issued during the lifetime of the first Randal.

This explanation may not appear important, yet it was deemed desirable to insert it: for several instances will hereafter occur in these pages, where the names of parties and the dates that will be assigned to certain events, will be found to differ very materially from those given by former writers. Local history would justly be considered incomplete, in which regard had not been paid to the correctness of the data upon which the narration of the facts it contains is founded. And all who have attentively studied the history of the county of Chester, must be quite aware



how very closely the errors of the old writers, have been adopted by many of their successors.

The incident which gave rise to the establishment of the famous Cheshire Minstrels, occurred during the Earldom of this Randal Blundeville: the most probable account of the event is that given by Dr. Gower, in his "Sketch of Materials," and is as follows:—

"Among the military achievements of the renowned Earl Randal, his heroic enterprises against Llewellyn, Prince of Wales, were not the least instance of his undaunted prowess. But being one day surprised and surrounded in his castle of Rhuddlan in Flintshire, by a force infinitely superior to his own, he sent an express to his great general Roger de Lacy, Constable of Chester, ordering him to come immediately to his assistance, with all the forces he could collect. This was at the time of the mid-summer fair, when there was assembled a great number of fiddlers, players, cobblers, and all sorts of loose persons, both men and women; as the occasion was critically urgent, from the imminent danger of the Earl's life, the Constable collected them and marched them, with the few troops that he could muster, to the relief of the Earl. Llewellyn, alarmed at the approach of so vast a multitude, raised the siege, and the Welsh fled with the greatest precipitation. After the Earl's return to Chester, the effusion of his gratitude formed his first act of sovereignty, by rewarding Lacy with an *exclusive prerogative* over those particular trades and mysteries that had been exercised by the fortunate and signal instruments of his royal preservation. The constable's son, afterwards reserved the exclusive privilege over the shoemakers, and some other mechanical occupations; but granted the *minstrel prerogative*, that over the fiddlers and players, to his steward, Hugh Dutton, of Dutton, and his heirs." This Hugh was the son of that Dutton who is supposed to have headed the band of minstrels. Sir Peter Leycester has given a copy of the charter of the Constable of Chester, granting to him this authority over "*Omnium Leccatorium et Meretricum totius Cestershiræ*;" and states that he found in the records of Chester a *quo warranto*, brought against the representative of the Duttons, in the reign of Henry VII. to shew why he required all the minstrels of Cheshire to meet before him at Chester yearly, at the feast of St. John the Baptist, and give him four bottles of wine, and one lance; and why each individual minstrel was obliged at the same time to pay him for his license fourpence-halfpenny; and also why he required every female of a certain description, in Cheshire,

and in the City of Chester, *officium secum exercente*, to pay him fourpence yearly, at the said feast.\* To which he pleaded prescription." The authority of the Duttons has been recognized by several acts of parliament, which exempt the minstrels of Cheshire, if licensed by the Duttons, from the penalties of those enactments by which all wandering singers, fiddlers, and similar persons, are deemed rogues or vagabonds. The manor of Dutton and the jurisdiction over the minstrels were sold in 1754 to a Mr. Lant of Putney, in Surrey, who in that year granted twenty-one licenses. The last court was held by him in 1756, when the existence of the incorporated body of the Cheshire minstrels was terminated, after having exercised its legal functions for upwards of five hundred years.

John de Scotia, earl of Huntingdon and of Chester, had married the daughter of Llewellyn, several years before the death of his uncle Randal, who had projected the alliance, in the expectation that it would strengthen and cement the treaty of peace into which he had entered with the Welsh prince. During the short reign of John no event transpired worthy of a particular notice. His death, which occurred in 1237, most writers attribute to his wife, who is more than suspected of having poisoned him.

With this earl terminated the independent government of the earls of Chester; during the one hundred and seventy years it had remained in the hands of the earls, the county had sustained an almost continued series of attacks from the Welsh, and had suffered greatly, not only from the requisite measures to repel the invaders, but from the frequent destruction of corn, provisions, and every description of property, to prevent their falling into the hands of their inveterate enemies. Whole districts were thus devastated, villages entirely razed to the ground, the Welsh frequently carrying their predatory excursions to the very walls of Chester; and so often did the suburb of Handbridge fall a sacrifice to their ravages, that it acquired the name of *Tre-boeth* or the burnt town. The destruction was so great, that Matthew Paris says, "the confines of each county exhibited the appearance of an uninhabited wilderness." p. 957.

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\* Hemingway, vol. i. 104. In the statutes 39 and 43 Elizabeth, the saving clause was continued for one year only, unless before the expiration of that time John Dutton and his heirs should procure the certificate of two of the judges, that he ought lawfully by charter, tenure, or prescription, to have the liberty to license such minstrels, and as in 1 James I. c. 25, the right is recognised without limitation, it is probable the proof so required had been adduced; a similar clause saving the right of the Duttons is found in the 17 George I. cap. 5.

The continually increasing power and influence of this local sovereignty, which had control over a vast extent of country, and held many important fortresses in various parts of the kingdom, aroused the apprehensions of the timid monarch, who could not forget, that when the barons of England hesitated in furnishing him with supplies, earl Randal had not only come forward and peremptorily refused to grant him the required subsidies, but that he had absolutely dared to prohibit the officers of the Pope from entering his territories to collect the papal dues; and that even John, the last earl, had demurred to the authority of the king's writ, requiring him to answer as to a division of his maternal property out of his own county. Randal had upheld the monarchy on several occasions, but Henry was apprehensive that the same power that had supported him, might, in other hands, depose him. He therefore gladly availed himself of the opportunity, that the death of John, without issue, afforded, to effect an object he had long been anxious to accomplish, the extinction of this extraordinary jurisdiction. The castles of Beeston and Chester, and some other fortresses, were taken into the possession of the king's troops. The earldom "he attached to the domains of the crown, and being unwilling that so great an inheritance as the earldom of Chester was, should be divided among a parcel of distaffs, as the king himself said, he gave to the sisters of John, other lands in exchange for those which he had demised among them." \*

The military commands in the city and county were confided to Hugh le Despencer, Stephen de Segrave, and Henry de Audley; while the civil jurisdiction remained vested with the barons of the earldom; for, as Camden observes, "the King himself, after the earldom came into his hands, for to maintain the honour of the Palatinateship, continued here the ancient rights and palatine privileges and courts, like as the kings of France did in the county of Champagne." In the following year, letters patent dated 10th May, 1238, were issued; a translation of which, extracted from the records of the court of chancery, reads thus:—

"The KING, to the Barons, Knights, Freemen, of the earldom of Chester, greeting. Know ye that the aforesaid earldom of Chester, together with our castles of Gannock and Dissarth, and all things to the same appertaining, We have commanded to be retained in our hands, as always belonging to our crown. And that there may be manifest proof to you that the same earldom without any separation at any time we

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\* Camden's Britannia, edition 1607, p. 454.

will to retain annexed to our crown, We have now assigned the same to our Queen in dower." In testimony, &c.

Henry retained the earldom in his own hands until the marriage of prince Edward with Eleanor of Castile, when he conferred it upon his son, who did not, however, assume the title either of prince of Wales or earl of Chester. Geoffrey de Langley, a man of cruel disposition, the prince appointed to be his lieutenant or governor of the county; the numerous exactions and cruelties practised by Langley on the Welsh, led them in revenge to enter Cheshire, in 1255, with considerable numbers, headed by Llewellyn, who carried desolation to the very gates of Chester, utterly destroying everything outside the fortified walls, by which alone the city was protected from their ravages. Unable to conquer the city, the Welsh retired to their own impregnable fastnesses, and there awaited the slow attempts of Henry to punish the inroads they had committed. The following year, prince Edward visited Cheshire and proceeded to take a military survey of all the fortresses in the earldom, but it was not until 1257 that Henry evinced some symptoms of retaliation, by summoning all his barons, and those who held by knight's fee, to meet him at Chester,\* with their vassals and followers.

History has not recorded the proceedings of this great array, at which even the Bishops were required to attend; but in consequence of the destruction of provisions in the country, a great famine ensued, and being unable to advance or maintain his army together he was obliged to retreat and disband his troops, leaving the eventual chastisement and subjection of the Welsh to his more energetic son.

The honour and advantage of the earldom did not long remain in the hands of Edward, for the young prince having been defeated at Lewes, and taken prisoner by Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, was only enabled to obtain his liberation by the cession of Cheshire to that nobleman. The prince immediately on being released visited Chester, to receive the homage of the citizens, and that of the knights and freeholders of the county, for the king; his own interest having been conveyed by charter, dated December, 1264, to Montfort, one of whose creatures, Luke de Tanai, was appointed Chief Justice. But Leicester was not destined to enjoy his new dignity beyond a few short months; the battle of Evesham was fatal to him, and the earldom

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\* The scroll of the succession of the Mayors and Sheriffs of Chester is complete from the period of Henry's visit to the city, to the present day, nearly six hundred years; Sir Walter Lynnet, then mayor, was appointed in 1247.

with all the vast estates forfeited by his rebellion, reverted to the crown. The castle of Chester, which had received considerable additions, and been strongly fortified by Tanai, had been besieged for several weeks by a body of the king's troops, when the Justice hearing of the fate of his patron, and the arrival of the prince at Beeston, surrendered himself to Edward, who was received at Chester with the warmest acclamations. On the 27th August, 1265, only twenty-three days after the great battle that had restored prince Edward to his honours, he issued a charter confirming to the barons of the earldom the rights and privileges they had formerly enjoyed under the grant of Randal.\*

The commencement of the reign of Edward the first was distinguished by immense preparations for a most vigorous attack upon Llewellyn and his hitherto unconquered people. The first campaign against the Welsh, however, either languished or was attended with trifling results; but in 1277 the English monarch summoned all his vassals to take the field, and meet him with their retainers at Chester, from which city he issued a proclamation, commanding all persons in the county that possessed £20 per annum to attend him there, to be made knights at their own expense. In his advance Edward repaired the castles of Flint and of Rhuddlan, opened roads into all the inmost fastnesses of Snowdon, and manifested the prudence of a statesman and a commander preparing for the subjugation of a brave people. Surrounded by such enemies, and perhaps influenced by the hope of delivering his beloved Eleanor, his affianced bride, the daughter of Simon de Montfort, from the captivity in which she was held by Edward, Llewellyn acquiesced in the conditions of peace imposed by the English prince; conditions which were in every respect equivalent to an admission of undisputed conquest.† Soon after the hollow and transient truce which succeeded, Llewellyn was married; and in the year 1281 mention is made of an infant daughter, for whom the king promised to provide honourably, and to give Llewellyn one thousand pounds sterling, and an earldom or county in England, if he would put him in possession of Snowdon.

The Welsh people had never acquiesced in the proceedings of their prince, and the natural consequences of all treaties of submission were soon exhibited. Llewellyn

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\* In this Charter, which was dated at Chester, the prince is styled *Edwardus illustris Regis Anglie Primogenitus*, only.

† Powell's History of Wales, 208. Mat. West. 1. The treaty was ratified at Rhuddlan, 10 Nov. 1277. Bymer ii. 546.

reproached himself for the sacrifice of his country; and he read reproof in the countenance of every faithful subject. To restrain the indignation of his people he found to be impracticable, and he probably felt it to be intolerable. The brave people of Snowdon declared, that though their prince gave the English king possession of their country, they would never submit to the yoke of strangers. Headed by David, the brother of Llewellyn, the hardy mountaineers waged an eager and active defence against the invaders, whom in several engagements they defeated, and Edward was obliged to obtain reinforcements of troops, in the collection of which he met with much difficulty. Llewellyn, instigated at length by the continued taunts of his offended subjects, upon the death of his wife again appeared at the head of his intrepid countrymen, and attacking the English in Anglesey, drove them before him with immense loss. In another action which immediately followed, the lords Audley and Clifford were slain, and the king himself reduced to the necessity of seeking refuge in one of his fortified castles.

Edward was at Chester for a month, during the summer of 1282, when, profiting by the experience he had acquired of the danger resulting from the destruction of provisions, he granted protections to many of the landowners, that their corn should not be destroyed; and offered convoys and liberal rewards to all who would assist him in victualling the army he was then assembling, the last that marched against the unfortunate Llewellyn, whose life was terminated the same year. Having been pressed by Mortimer, the great border chief, he appointed a meeting of the lords of the neighbourhood, to concert measures for their future proceedings; when he was attacked by that chieftain, and fell the victim of assassination rather than of battle.\* As soon as his rank was discovered, his head was sent to Edward, then at Shrewsbury, by whose command it was placed on the Tower of London, with a crown of willows, in base mockery of those ancient legends which were fondly believed by the Welsh to prefigure their delivery, under this symbol of sovereignty. Soon after death of

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\* Mat. Paris says, he was slain with other Welshmen in the battle between the English and Welsh, 1282, by Edmund Mortimer, who with others rushed into the Welsh army and cut off his head, sending it to the Tower of London. Walsingham agrees with this statement, except the date, which he fixes in 1283. Stow says, while Llewellyn was speaking disgracefully of the English, at Builth Castle, Roger le Strange ran upon him and cut off his head. And the Welsh historians state, that retiring to a grove, while some of the Welsh were defending the bridge called *Pons Orwyn*, "suddenly there came horsemen, and as he would have escaped, one Adam Francton pursued him and ran him through, but knew him not; and when he came to see his face in the spoil, he knew him well, so he struck off his head."

Llewellyn his brother David was taken prisoner by Edward, and confined in Chester Castle, until convicted of high treason by the Parliament of Shrewsbury, and put to death.\* With him terminated the independence of the Welsh. Cambria was annexed to England, and placed under English institutions; nor was it the least felicitous of political devices that assigned a Welsh fortress as the birth place of an expected son, and invested the young Cambro-Briton with the title of Prince of Wales. In 1300, the final submission of the Welsh was confirmed by the attendance of all their chiefs and freeholders to do homage to the king for their respective lands. Edward of Carnarvon was summoned to Parliament as "Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester, our most dear son;" he was the first to whom those titles were addressed. Several years after he had ascended the throne as Edward the Second, he visited Chester, there to receive his favourite Gavestone, whom he had foolishly recalled from the banishment imposed by his more powerful barons. It is very probable that the importance of the city, and the strength of its fortifications, attracted the notice of the king, who might have regarded it as a place of refuge during the struggles which distinguished his unhappy reign; for it is certain that Murage dues were levied in various places for the repairing of the walls of Chester; and also that immediately before his deposition the Water Tower was built, and other defences made.†

The earldom of Chester was next given to Edward of Windsor, who was summoned to Parliament when only ten years old, as earl of Chester and of Flint, which latter county was then considered as part of Cheshire, being included in the hundred of Atiscross.‡

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\* "He was sentenced to be beheaded and drawn asunder by horses, 'that his heart and bowels should be burnt before his face, that the head should be exposed beside that of his brother, in London, and the four quarters of his body distributed, to Chester and the three other principal places on the borders:' probably the earliest instance of that horrible punishment afterwards appointed for treason, of which it required all the power of reason, eloquence, and character, united in the person of Sir Samuel Romilly, five hundred years afterwards, to procure the abolition; as if to warn mankind how easily the most execrable example may be introduced, and with what difficulty a country is purified from it." Mackintosh's Eng, i. 254.

† The Water Tower was built at the expense of the citizens, by a mason of the appropriate name of John Helpstone, who undertook to erect and complete the building for one hundred pounds. This Tower, which is the present museum, is seventy-two feet high, and thirty-one in diameter; at the period of its erection the tide flowed to its walls, in which, until recently were seen the ring-places for the mooring of vessels.

‡ "About a mile from the town of Flint, and on the road to Chester, stood a cross, whose pedestal is still remembered, which was called Atiscross, and the land about it is still called *Croes-Ati*. This probably was a place of note, for it gave name to a large hundred, at that time part of Cheshire." Pennant's First Tour, i. 77.

Edward III. was succeeded in the earldom of Chester by his son Edward of Woodstock, who granted several charters to the citizens which are yet extant, and in which he is stiled *Edwardus, Illustris Regis Angliæ Filius, Comes Cestrie*.

Dugdale states that in 1353, in consequence of an insurrection preventing the administration of justice, the prince, attended by the earls of Stafford and Warwick, arrived with a body of troops to protect Sir Richard Willoughby and Sir Richard Snareshill, two of the king's judges. The cause of this disturbance is unknown, but most probably it arose from the high price of provisions, as the year is recorded as one of great scarcity. Knighton adds, that the citizens were so conscious of the enormity of their conduct that they purchased their pardon by promising to pay a heavy penalty. Three years after this, the "mayor's great feast" is mentioned in the city annals as having cost eleven shillings and ten pence.

Richard of Bordeaux succeeded to the titles of Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall, and earl of Chester,\* having had a special grant for that of Cornwall, in consequence of his father, the Black Prince, having died during the life-time of Edward III. Many charters now in Chester, granted by Richard during his frequent visits to Chester shew how much he was attached to the capital of his favourite county, in which he was so highly popular, that at a moment of great extremity, when he could not collect any troops upon whom reliance could be placed, he adopted two thousand Cheshire archers for his body-guard. At the latter part of his reign, he erected the earldom into a principality, annexing to it the lands of Bromfield, Yale, Chirk Castle, and other possessions, forfeited (under legal forms that were a mockery of justice) by the condemnation of the Earl of Arundel. Richard himself assumed the title of Prince of Chester; and it was ordained, that no grant should hereafter be made of the new principality to any person except to the eldest son of the king, if it should so please the king to advance him: 21 Richard II. cap. xix.

From Shrewsbury, where the parliament that passed this enactment had been held, Richard, accompanied by many of his principal nobility, proceeded to Chester, where he was present at the installation of his chaplain, John Brughill, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, in the Church of St. John, then a Cathedral of that diocese.

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\* But after his brilliant victories in France, he bore the titles of Prince of Aquitaine and Wales, Duke of Cornwall, and Earl of Chester.



The creation of the principality was one of the last acts of that unfortunate monarch, whose next visit to Chester was under circumstances of a very different nature. Henry of Lancaster having taken the city and castle, assembled his forces there previously to marching against Richard, who was then in Wales, having returned from Ireland upon hearing of Lancaster's invasion. Deserted by most of his troops, Richard a few days afterwards became the prisoner of Lancaster, by whom he was brought to Chester, and confined in the castle, on his route to London.\*

After Richard's deposition, the proceedings of the parliament, by which Cheshire had been created into a principality, were cancelled by his successor, Henry IV., who conferred the earldom on his eldest son, created Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall, and Earl of Chester, in 1399. Henry had scarcely mounted the throne he had usurped, than he found himself involved in commotions; in the first year of his reign an order was issued to the mayor of Chester, to seize John and Adam Hesketh, and all

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\* The circumstances that led to Richard's incarceration are thus related by the authors of the "Beauties of England and Wales," "Richard was met by earl Percy at Conway, who there delivered the purport of his diplomacy; on the king's (who had been too much addicted to reliance on *espionage*) mistrusting the sincerity of the message, and the professed intentions of the earl; the latter to quiet, or if possible allay, the royal apprehension, accompanied him to the temple of the Deity; attended high mass; and at the altar took the oath of allegiance and fidelity. The snare was successfully laid; but when they had proceeded to a defile in the mountainous recesses, near Penmaen Rhos, the king perceived his error in having placed confidence in a sacramental oath, by the appearance of a numerous military band bearing upon their banners the Northumberland arms. He would have escaped from the decoy, but Percy springing forward caught the bridle of his horse, and directed his course towards Flint; and the poor deluded prince had only time to reproach the miscreant with his perjury, by observing that the God he had sworn before that morning would do him justice, and amply repay the blasphemous transaction at the day of judgement. After halting with his royal prisoner at Rhuddlan, for the purpose of refreshment, he conveyed him with that promptitude which is proverbial, because essentially requisite for the completion of treacherous designs, to the castle of Flint. The next day the duke of Lancaster entered the castle all armed, his basinet excepted, king Richard came down from the keep to meet him, when Bolingbroke falling on his knees, with his cap in his hand, immediately when he saw the king, assumed, by repeating the ceremony, a dutiful and graceful appearance. On seeing this apparent act of rational submission, the king then took off his hood and spoke first: 'Fair cousin of Lancaster you are right welcome,' the duke bowing still more courteously replied, 'My liege lord I am come before you sent for me, the reason why I will shew; the common fame among your people is such, that ye have for the last twenty or two and twenty years ruled them rigorously; but if it please you my lord I will help you to govern them better.' Then the king answered, 'Fair cousin of Lancaster, sith it pleaseth me well.' The intrigue then had its announcement; the contriver of the plot quickly threw off the mask, and adding insolence to infamy, "with a high sharpe voyce," says Stow, "the duke badde bring forth the king's horses; and then two little nagges, not worth forty franks, were brought forth; the king was set on the one, and the earl of Salisbury on the other; and thus the duke brought the king from Flint to Chester, where he was delivered to the duke of Gloucester's sonne, and to the earl of Arundel's sonne, that loved him but a little, for he had put their fathers to death, who led him strait to the castle." Stow's Annals, 322.

their confederates who had assaulted the castle, beheaded one of his officers, and endeavoured to persuade the citizens that Richard was living.

In the great struggle between the King and the earl of Northumberland, Chester was visited by Hotspur; who issued a proclamation there, that Richard II. was still alive; this opinion obtaining credence throughout the county, where that monarch had been so much esteemed, induced great numbers of the citizens to join the standard of the Percys. The terrific battle of Shrewsbury, so fatal to the gentry of England, was particularly disastrous to the men of Chester; upwards of two hundred knights and esquires of the county, with vast numbers of their retainers, are mentioned as having fallen on the side of the insurgents; while Sir John Calveley, Sir John Massey, and a few others, are known to have been slain under the banners of Henry. By the support the citizens had given to his opponents, they incurred the displeasure of Henry; but in 1405, a treaty of amnesty was concluded between the King's commissioners, and the city and county, which was enrolled at Chester, and a pardon was granted on paying a fine of five hundred marks. Suspicions of the fidelity of the citizens however, appear to have been entertained for some time, for even in 1409, the mayor was removed, and Sir William Brereton appointed military governor of the city.

Henry V., the scourge of France, and according to Leycester, "the mirror of magnificence, and passing-swift in running," held the earldom from 1399 to 1422. The pertinacious enmity which the Cambrians, and particularly those of South Wales, exhibited at this period against the English, was a source of much apprehension. No one who has not diligently perused the proclamations of Henry, can conceive his alarm at the victories of Owen Glendower, who held his throne by a more undisputed assent of all his subjects than Henry of Lancaster could boast. Worst, if not defeated, by the mountaineers, he entrusted the management of the war to his son, whom he had previously made Prince of Wales; and to which dignity was added the command of all the King's forces in Salop, Worcester, Gloucester, and Hereford, with the highest prerogatives of justice and mercy, before the young prince had attained his twentieth year. But the gallant youth had been early trained to war, for in his first campaign, in Ireland, when only a boy of twelve years, he had been knighted in the field by Richard II. and his conduct in South Wales, shewed that the confidence of Henry in his gallant son, had not been misplaced. The insurgents were defeated the first time by the young prince in 1407; and though ten years elapsed before the complete reduction of their country,

yet they never recovered from the effects of that battle, which was announced to Henry in a letter yet preserved among the public records. "My most redoubted and sovereign lord and father: the xi of the present month of March your rebels of Glamorgan, Uske, Netherwent, and Overwent, were assembled to the number of eight thousand. Against them were assembled your faithful knights. Your men had the field nevertheless." Owen survived the final overthrow of his party, and died in obscurity, about 1416.

In the 25th year of his reign, Henry VI., who never bore the title of earl of Chester, having succeeded to the crown when only eight months old, granted a charter in which, after reciting that great concourse of people in times past, strangers and others, resorted to Chester, by reason of the goodness of the port, and that great trade in victuals and other things, in and out of Wales, had existed to the great profit of the city, until the late rebellion,—that of Owen Glendower,—and also that the same port of Chester was lamentably decayed by reason of the abundance of sand, which had choked up the creek; he for these reasons released to the city ten pounds of the fee farm rent, reserved by Edward I.; and he also released the sheriff from all the arrears of the rent then due.

During the reign of the sixth Henry, at a parliament held at Leicester in 1450, an attempt was made to levy a subsidy upon the county of Chester; this was considered a serious attack on the privileges of the palatinate; a general meeting was called, and it was determined that a petition to that "most christian, benigne, and gracious king," should be presented from his "most humble subjects, and true abaisant liege people, the abbots, priors, and all the clergy; your barons, knights, esquires, and commonalty of the county;" stating that the earls of Chester always held their courts of Parliament at their own will; that by the original grant of the earldom to Hugh Lupus to be held by the sword, they had their own courts of common law, and as the tenor of the indictments by the law of England ran, *contra coronam et dignitatem*; so in the courts of the palatinate it was, *contra dignitatem gladii Cestrie*; that they had their own courts of Exchequer, Chancery, and Common Pleas, and that as they had never sent any representatives to parliament out of their own county, they claimed to be relieved from the required subsidy. Their prayer was granted and their privileges were confirmed.

In 1455, Margaret of Anjou, queen of Henry VI., visited Chester, "upon progresse with many great lordes and ladyes, and was most graciously received by the mayor and citizens." But the royal "progresse" was not one of pleasure alone; the real object of Margaret was to enlist the gentry of the county into the cause of her husband, and her visit was again repeated the year before the battle of Blore Heath, when she distributed *white swans* among the principal partisans of the king, as cognizances of the house of Lancaster. The queen won the hearts of the citizens by her royal courtesy and hospitality. In the former great conflict, at Shrewsbury, the gentry of Cheshire were nearly all enrolled on one side, but at this period the feelings of the county appear to have undergone a considerable change, for the chief houses were arrayed in almost equal numbers under the banners of the respective roses. "In the great battail of Blore Heath," say the old chronicles of Hall, "wer slayn xxiiij c persons. But the greatest plague lighted on the Cheshire men, because one halfe of the shire was on the one part, and the other on the other part; but the Erle's [the earl of Salisbury] two sonnes, the one called Sir John Nevil, and the other Sir Thomas, wer sorely wounded, which soberly iorneing into the north countrey, thinking there to repose themselves, wer in their iorney apprehended by the queen's frendes, and conveyed to Chester, but their keepers delivered them shortly, or elles the Marche men had destroyed the Gayles. Such favor had the commons of Wales to the Duke of Yorke's band and his affinitie, that they could suffre no wrong to be doen, nor evil word to be spoken of hym or his frendes."

Edward IV. visited Chester in January, 1462, where he conferred the shrievalty of the county upon Sir William Stanley the elder, of Hooton, who at that time was carver to the king. The infant son of this monarch, whom he had made prince of Wales and earl of Chester, was deposed and murdered soon after his accession to the crown, by his uncle, afterwards Richard III. Richard appointed his only son Edward earl of Chester, in 1483, but the youth dying the following year, the title was not again assumed until 1489, when Arthur, eldest son of Henry VII. was created prince of Wales and earl of Chester. This monarch was at Chester in 1494, with his mother and many of the great nobility of England, on their way to visit the earl of Derby, at Hawarden castle, which was then considered as included in the county of Chester, and so continued until the honour of Hawarden castle and its members, were, by the 33 Henry VIII. c. 13, annexed to Flintshire. Henry was a great favourite among the

Welsh, who were proud to own him as their countryman, and to their exertions he was mainly indebted for his elevation to the throne. When Henry assisted by Lewis XI. landed in Wales to contest the crown with Richard, he immediately unfurled the old banner, the Red Dragon of the Cambrians, who enthusiastically flocked round their national standard. Subsequently, when he became monarch of England, he placed the red dragon on his escutcheon, with the three lions of Normandy, and he created the new office of pursuivant of arms with the title of Rouge Dragon. By the assistance of the archives of Wales, authentic or fabulous, he pretended to trace his genealogy to Cadwallader the last of their chieftains that had borne the title of king of Britain, and from him to Brutus the son of Eneas, the founder of the Britons. Such were the sole rewards,—the mere gratifying of a national vanity or prejudice,—that Henry conferred upon a people to whose devotion he was indebted for his kingdom.

The young prince, Arthur, came to Chester on the 4th August 1498, when he remained for several weeks, during which "the playe\*" of the Assumption of our Ladye," was acted before the prince at the abbey gates.

Henry VII. being at Chester in the twenty-first year of his reign, granted a charter to the citizens, in which, after conferring several new privileges,† he amply confirmed all they had previously enjoyed.

During the reign of his successor, Henry VIII., who was created Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester on the death of his brother Arthur, several municipal regulations were made, that were of considerable advantage to the city, but the palatine privileges were materially abridged. An order was made that none should attend priest's offerings, first mass, gospel ales, or Welsh weddings within the city, under a penalty; and the "offering of balls" was also put down.

Henry directed his letters patent to the mayor of Chester, ordering that the inhabitants should not be "pressed into the wars by any royal placard, it being meet they should remain at home for the defence of the city, &c.; and the mayor was not to suffer any officer to take any person in the city, except the authority produced, did especially revoke the letters so directed to the mayor." This exemption probably arose

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\* "These playes were the work of one Randall Higden, a monk of Chester Abbeye, who in a good devotion to translate the Bible into several partes and playes soe as the comon people might learne the same by their aid and action in their sighte."

† The first Recorder, Ralph Birkenhead was appointed under this Charter.

from the constant petty warfare that for centuries had existed between the people of Wales and the citizens of Chester, and even at the present day, there are many proverbial sayings among the Cambrians, in which allusion is made to these feuds, and to the wealth of the city, apparently an object of much envy to the Welsh.\*

The mal-administration of justice throughout Cheshire and North Wales attracted the notice of Henry, who ordered that justices of the peace should be appointed for those parts in the same manner as for the other districts of the kingdom; the preamble to the act by which they were constituted, distinctly says, that justice had not hitherto been "fairly dealt with" in Chester, and the several counties of North Wales.

The inhabitants of the palatinate, having, upon the abridgement of their privileges, no longer a parliament of their own, petitioned to be allowed to send two knights and two burgesses to the imperial parliament; and by 32 Henry VIII., it was enacted, that for the future two knights for the county, and two burgesses for the city should be returned. In the following session the sanctuary was removed from Manchester to Chester, but upon the petition of the citizens, representing that Chester being a great port town, and on the borders of Wales, was a very unfit place for a sanctuary for malefactors, it was afterwards removed to Stafford.

In 1568 queen Elizabeth, by letters patent, acknowledged the power of the mayors and other officers of the city, and also of the justices and chamberlains of the county; certain of the privileges were confirmed, the custody of the property of orphans was provided for; it was ordered that all pleas of lands and tenements, and all contracts and causes arising within the county should not be tried out of it; and it was further declared that the president and council of the principality of Wales should have no jurisdiction within the county or city of Chester. For the enjoyment of the liberties, on the accession of every new earl the county was to pay a *mize* or fine of three thousand marks.

When James I. granted a confirmation of this charter, in 1604, he required the

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\* Mr. Lloyd, the author of "Beaumaris Bay," selects the following: *Mwy nag un bwa y'w y Nghaer*: "more than one yew bow in Chester:" allusive to its means of defence. *Codi cyn cwn Caer*; "up before the dogs at Chester;" expressive of the vigilance of the citizens. A favourite nursery song in Wales alludes to the former commercial importance of the city as an object of ambition to the young cambrians:—

"Gurw, gurw, gurw i Gaer,  
I briodi merch y maer."

"Trotting, trotting, trotting to Chester,  
To marry the mayor's daughter."

mayor and burgesses to elect Hugh Mainwaringe to be Recorder of the city, "givinge us therebie a testimonie of your conformitie to anything yt is recommended from us of you," as the monarch expressed himself; but his unconstitutional demand was resisted in a letter, which for the honour of the city deserves to be transmitted to posterity:—

*"To the King's Most Excellent Majesty.*

Most dreade and most gracious sov'igne, in obedience of yr Ma'ties letters, to us addressed, dated xxii of November laste, but delivered firste of the tenth of this instant, January, for the electing of Hughe Mainwaringe unto the office of Recorder, within this citie, which is now become void by the death of the late recorder, the vi of this month. Wee, the Maior, Aldermen and Council, unto whom the election belongeth, assembled ourselves together upon receipte of your highness' said letters. But forasmuch as by the said charter, granted unto us by your noble progenitor, Henry VII of blessed memorie, and lately confirmed by your Ma'tie, noe person is eligible to that offee except he be one of the xxiiii aldermen, and none can be chosen an alderman except he be first enfranchised and made a free citizen amongeste us. Such the said Hughe Mainwaringe is not, nor ever came he hithere in person to desyre the same, but is a mere stranger to us and the state of this incorporation, for the observance of w'ch charter and all other liberties granted to this city, we have taken our corporate oaths. Wee therefore, your Ma'ties most humble and loyall subjects cannot, without expresse breach of our oaths and infringinge of our liberties, elect the said Hugh Mainwaringe to be our recorder; of wh'ch our juste excuse, we doe most humbly beseeche your Ma'ties gracious acceptacion. And that your highness will be pleased of your accustomed grace and clemencie, to vouchsafe unto us our free election, and to give us leave to make choise of a man to that office who is capable thereof, by our charter; whereof at this time there are dyverse amongeste us, whoe are already aldermen of this citie, and such as have heretofore donne good service to this corporation, and evrie waie fitt for the place, both for their learninge in the lawes, their knowledge and experience of our orders and liberties, and their sinceritie in the true religion. And wee, your Ma'ties most loyall subjectes, accordinge to our bounden duties, doe and will always upon the knees of our hartes praie to the Almightye God, for the most happie and prosperous state of your most excellent Ma'ties long reign over us."

It would appear the corporation of Chester were resolute in their proceedings, for on the day following the date of this letter they elected Thomas Gamul, who had previously represented the city in parliament, to the vacant office of Recorder, which he held until his death in 1613.

James I. whose eldest son Henry, had been created earl of Chester, a title which after his death was conferred on Charles, his second son, visited the county in 1617,

in great state, being attended by "many honourable earls, reverend bishops, and worthy knights and courtiers, besides all the gentry of the shire." He was received at Chester with every mark of loyalty by the mayor and officers of the city, who after a series of entertainments presented him with "a fair standing cup, having a cover doubly gilt, and therein one hundred jacobins of gold." Among the parties in attendance was William, earl of Derby, who was then chamberlain of the palatine. The Stanleys had long been connected with Cheshire, and had enjoyed many offices of the highest distinction. Upon every occasion, the citizens of Chester, were anxious to shew their respect to the members of a family that had so greatly contributed to their welfare; accordingly, in the Harleian MSS., it is recorded, that on the 18th September, 1630, there "came to Chester, being on a Saturday, the duchess of Tremoye in France, and mother-in-law to the lord Strange, and many other great estates; and all the gentry of Cheshier, Flintshier, and Denbighshier, went to meet her at Hoole Heath, with the earl of Derby, being at least six hundred men; all the gentlemen of the artelery yard, lately erected at Chester, met her in Cow Lane in very stately manner, all with great white and blew fithers, and went before her chariot to the bishop's pallas, and making a yard, let her thro' the midst, and there gave her three volleys of shot, and so returned to their yard; also the maior and aldermen in their best gowns and aparel, were on a stage in the Eastgate Street to entertagn her."

The celebrated William Prynne was conveyed through Chester in 1636, on his way to Carnarvon, where he was imprisoned by order of the court of Star Chamber. In his progress through the county, and on his approaching the city, he was met by numbers who had imbibed sentiments similar to his, and who testified towards him the most unmeasured sympathy and approbation. The emissaries of the court narrowly watched these proceedings, and many of the admirers of Prynne falling under the displeasure of the monarch, were fined in sums varying from two to five hundred pounds. Some of these parties recanted before the bishop; but others, among whom were Peter Lee and Richard Golborne, paid their several penalties of three hundred pounds. In the following year, four portraits of Prynne, painted in Chester, were burnt at the High Cross, in the presence of all the magistracy. The feverish disposition thus evinced, threatening some political convulsion, Charles appointed the earl of Derby, with the mayor, and the earl of Rivers, his commissioners of array for the city and county of Chester; an office which they continued to hold until the commencement of the civil war



between the King and the parliament, in the calamities attendant upon which, Cheshire was intimately and fatally involved.

The proceedings of the King had rendered him by no means popular in the county, but the feelings of the citizens were decidedly opposed to the parliamentary movements. When the first symptoms of disaffection were exhibited in Chester in August, 1642, Sir William Brereton, by beat of drum, exhorted the citizens to enlist themselves on the side of the parliament, the mayor, and principal inhabitants, rose and disarmed his few followers, bringing the knight, who was a person of much influence and member for the county, before the magistrates, to answer at the Pentice Court, for the disturbance he had created. This first ebullition of party, created much alarm among the loyalists, and measures of defence were immediately adopted by the constituted authorities.

On the 25th of this same month, Charles raised his standard at Nottingham, which was understood by both parties, to import a declaration of war. His first movement was toward Shrewsbury, but on his route to that place, he despatched the following letter to Chester.

“CHARLES R. Trusty and well-beloved: We greete you well. Whereas we have resolved to repaire to our citie of Chester on Friday next, these are to will and require you, to warne all the trained bands of that our citie, to be in readiness, and to give their attendance to us, in our entrance unto the citie, and to take care that neccssary provisions bee made for entertainment of us and our retinue; so not doubting of your diligence therein, we bid you heartily farewell.

Given at our court at Stafford, this 18th September, 1642. To our trusty and well-beloved, the mayor, &c.”

The King arriving at the city on the day appointed, with a numerous train of the nobility and gentry, was received by the mayor and civic authorities with great ceremony; and at the conclusion of a magnificent entertainment, he accepted their very agreeable offering of two hundred pounds, with half that sum for the Prince of Wales.

War being decided upon, the most energetic means were adopted by the citizens to strengthen the walls and fortifications of their city, which was deemed a place of great military importance. Sir Nicholas Byron, a soldier of great talent was appointed governor of Chester, and Colonel-General of Cheshire and Shropshire. A levy of three hundred men was raised by the citizens, independent of the ordinary train bands;

constant watches were preserved at the gates, and a monthly assessment made for their maintenance. As the danger became more imminent the authorities redoubled their efforts: the records of the city contain a minute, that

"Att an assemblie houlden in the Common-hall of Please, upon Fridaye the third day of February William Ince, Maior, *civit. Cestr.* Anno Domini 1643. Anno Rex Caroli Decimo Octavo. It is ordered by general consent that the sune of five hundred pounds shall be forthwith assessed and levied upon all the inhabitants of this city, towards the making of fortifications, and for all publique charges requisite for the good of this Citie, and in default of payment the same to be levied by distress."\* Signed in succession by the mayor, sheriffs, leave-lookers, the earls of Derby and of Rivers, all the aldermen, and sixty of the principal citizens."

The appearance of the enemy within a month after the completion of the new works, shewed the necessity of the energetic measures adopted by the citizens, many of whom were doomed to experience a long protracted period of misery, terminated only by death from famine or the sword.

On Friday the 18th July, 1643, Sir William Brereton made a violent assault upon the city, but after a severe conflict he was obliged to retreat, leaving many of his men killed and wounded. The citizens had only one killed; but the work of destruction then commenced, for "Spittal Chapel, in Boughton, was taken down, and all the houses thereabouts; many other houses and barns were likewise destroyed, to prevent the enemy making lodgements in these buildings."

Defeated at Chester, Brereton proceeded to Hawarden, where he was very joyfully received. Having taken possession of the strong castle there, he was enabled to intercept any supplies of coal, corn, or provision, intended for Chester, which proved a serious inconvenience to the inhabitants. The military proceedings in these parts were probably not on a very extensive scale, for great lamentations are stated to have been made at one "Thomas Ravenscroft, Esq. of Bretton, who pretending to be of the king's party ventured from Hawarden into Chester, and applied to the governor for

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\* The following extract of a letter to the Marquis of Ormonde, written at Chester, the 21st December, 1642, by Mr. Arthur Trevor, may account for the apparent suspension of the proceedings of the citizens, from the king's departure, until the following February. "North Wales and South Wales, except a very few, are his Majesty's. Cheshire hath agreed upon a cessation of arms for a month. I confess, my Lord, I do not like this kind of measuring out of treason by the month. Manchester is the very London of these parts, the liver that sends blood into all the countries thereabouts, and until it be cleansed or obstructed I cannot imagine there can be any safety in this neighbourhood."

a barrel of gunpowder and a quantity of match, which, as he was unsuspected, was given to him."

The day after Brereton's arrival at Hawarden, he summoned Sir William Shippman, who had been recently appointed governor of Chester, to surrender the city, upon pain of his great displeasure; but the demand was indignantly rejected by that officer, who in expectation of an assault, as a preliminary measure of defence, ordered that every house in Handbridge should be burnt down; and the next day witnessed the destruction, by flames, of Flookersbrook Hall and Bache Hall, lest they should afford protection to the enemy.

A party of the king's troops that had been withdrawn from Ireland were, immediately after their landing at Mostyn near the mouth of the Dee, employed in endeavouring to regain possession of Hawarden Castle.\* In reply to a verbal requisition to give up the fortress, the royalist commander received a very long statement written in the puritanical style of that period, which after absolutely refusing to surrender the castle concludes

"We fear the loss of our religion more than the loss of our dearest blood, and being resolved to make good our trust, we put our lives into the hands of that God who can, and we hope will, secure them more than our walls and weapons."

To which Col. Marrow, who commanded the besiegers, returned the following answer,

"It is not to hear you preach that I am sent hither, but it is in his majesty's name to demand the castle for his majesty's use. As your allegiance binds you to be true to him, and not to inveigle those innocent souls that are in with you; so I desire your resolution, if you will deliver the castle or not. 28th Nov. 1643."

A long and useless correspondence ensued, for the frequent letters of Marrow and of Gen. Gibson, who had succeeded to the command of the king's troops, produced no effect; nor was the eloquence of the pen, or the terror of the name of Captain Thomas Sandford, leader of the firelocks, of more avail upon the obstinate roundheads. The

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\* "Thence to Hawarden we came where our men besieged the castle there, but lately and falsely betrayed by its owner a week before we came, a man intrusted much by the king and officers, the more is his sin, one Ravenscroft, where we stayed three days, in which time, very happily, we had six men killed; for at no less cost would our men believe that Englishmen would fight with any Englishmen but papists." Extract of a letter from Capt. Henry Byrch, at the Red Lyon, without the Eastgate, Chester, to the Marquis of Ormonde's Secretary.

letter of Sandford, who seldom omitted to accompany the summons of his general with a dispatch of his own, is strictly characteristic of the man:—

“Gentlemen,

“I presume you very well know, or have heard, of my condition and disposition; that I neither give nor take quarter. I am now with my firelocks (who never yet neglected an opportunity to correct rebels) ready to use you as I have done the Irish, for loath I am to spill my countrymen’s blood; wherefore by these I advise you to your fealty and obedience towards his Majesty, and to shew yourselves faithful subjects, by delivering the castle into my hands for his Majesty’s use, in so doing you shall be received into mercy, &c.; otherwise, if you put me to the least trouble, or loss of blood, to force you, expect no quarter for man, woman, or child. I hear you have some of our late Irish army in your company; they very well know me, and that my firelocks use not to parley. Be not unadvised, but think of your liberty, for I vow all hopes of relief are taken from you, and our intents are not to starve you, but to batter and storm you, and then hang you all, and follow the rest of that rebellious crew. I am no bread and cheese rogue, but was ever a loyalist, and will ever be while I can write or name

THOMAS SANDFORD, Captain of Firelocks.

Nov. 28, 1643.

I expect your speedy answer this Tuesday night at Broad Lane Hall, where I now am your near neighbour.

*To the officers commanding-in-chief at*

*Hawarden Castle, and their concerts there.*

No attention having been paid by the garrison to these epistolary communications, the besiegers applied to the governor of Chester for reinforcements, to enable them to carry the castle by assault. And the annals of the city state that on the 1st December, 1643, it was ordered in Council that “three hundred of the citizens and train bands, together with their proper officers, and the companies of Captains Thropp and Morgell, do march to the assistance of the king’s troops, at Hawarden.” This record, now in the Town Hall, at Chester, bears the signatures of the governor, the mayor, W. Mainwaring, R. Grosvenor, R. Cholmondeley, and others. The reinforcement, according to the historians of Cheshire “arrived at its destination on the 2nd December; the next day a brisk attack was made upon the castle, and early the following morning the garrison hoisted the white flag and surrendered upon conditions,—that they should march out half armed, with two pairs of colours, one flying and one furled, and to have a safe escort either to Wem or Nantwich. Thus was this important fortress, which it was feared would prove so troublesome a neighbour, subdued in the short

space of three days. The party that marched from Chester to assist in its subjugation returned to the city without the loss of a single man." But Captain Byrch in the same letter, from which an extract has already been made, gives a different version to the affair, which shews the extreme difficulty of arriving at the actual facts, when the narration of an event is derived from an interested party:—

"The besieged at Hawarden Castle there, expected daily succours; our men knowing the contrary, fed them in that expectation, to starve them. There were therein, say 120 men, being all that was left of Sir Thomas Middleton's regiment, seditious chaplain and all, except himself. Their necessity was of nothing more than water. Our men most part withdrew to Chester, leaving only two companies of our own, and as I take it 500 Welshmen to watch them. After eleven or twelve days, at most, they delivered the castle on condition they should march away with half their arms, one colour, and £25 worth of goods; which articles were not so well performed as I could wish, but our men profess they could not help it, but it was the fault of some of Lord *Chomley's* men, who bade them remember *Reading*, for which fact they say Captain Sandford hewed some of our own side sufficiently, and (which was more than the articles required) guarded them out of Wales." "This day," he adds, "we shall march out from Chester with at least four thousand foot and one thousand horse."

The troops to which the Captain here refers consisted of several regiments that had arrived from Ireland and were placed under the command of Sir John Byron, recently elevated to the peerage and appointed Governor of Chester. The affairs of the king in these parts, assumed at this period a more favourable aspect. Beeston Castle had fallen into the hands of his forces,\* and a strong body of the parliamentary troops were defeated near Middlewich, with considerable loss. Doddington Hall, the seat of Sir

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\* "On the 13th December, 1643, a little before day, Capt. Sandford, a most devoted loyalist, who came out of Ireland with eight of his firelocks, crept up the steep hill of the castle, and got into the upper ward, of which he took possession, although it was deemed most impregnable. Steele, who then commanded in it for the parliament, was tried for cowardice, and suffered death for it on Monday, January 28, 1644, but it was supposed unjustly, inasmuch as some of his men betrayed symptoms of fear, and he himself did not feel safe in trusting them. What made much against Steele was that he took Sandford down into his chamber where they dined together, and much beer was sent up to Sandford's men, and the castle after a short parley was delivered up; Steele and his men having leave to march with their arms and colours to Nantwich; but as soon as he was come into that town, the soldiers were so enraged against him, that they would have pulled him to pieces, had he not been immediately clapped into prison. There was much wealth and goods in the Castle belonging to gentleman and neighbours, who had brought it thither for safety, besides ammunition and provisions for half a year, all which the enemy got." Burchall's Diary, and Dr. Cowper's MSS. There is yet a tradition in the neighbourhood, that the greater part of the valuables were on the approach of the enemy thrown into the deep draw-wells of the higher and lower wards, but the sudden capture of the castle renders this improbable.

Henry Delves, was captured by the Royalists, who successfully carried the strongly fortified Church of Acton; Crewe Hall surrendered after a desperate assault, in which the assailants lost upwards of sixty men; the towns of Middlewich, Northwich, and several other places were also taken. But here terminated the temporary success of the Royalists in Cheshire, for shortly after Lord Byron in an attack upon Nantwich, the very centre as he terms it of this "ill affected country," which throughout the whole of the civil wars was firm in its devotion to the cause of the Parliament, was defeated, and forced to retreat with much loss. Among the slain was the partisan Captain Sandford, in whose pockets were found several letters to the inhabitants of Nantwich, pointing out the disastrous consequence that would inevitably result from their not surrendering to his invincible Firelocks.

The King's troops were however doomed to experience much heavier disasters in this neighbourhood. Nantwich, described by Clarendon as being "the rendezvous of all the disaffected of Cheshire and Lancashire," had been kept besieged by the Royalists during the winter of 1643-4, a winter distinguished by its great severity and an uncommon fall of snow, on the melting of which the waters of the River Weaver having spread beyond their usual bounds, materially inconvenienced the besiegers and obliged them to withdraw their artillery and baggage. In the confusion attendant upon this, they were attacked by Brereton and by General Fairfax, who had joined him with a large body of troops from Lancashire; Byron was totally defeated, most of his principal officers being taken prisoners, and the greater part of his soldiers slain or dispersed.

The entire county, except Beeston Castle and Chester, soon fell into the hands of the Parliamentary Commanders, whose attention was then directed to the reduction of those important fortresses. Some of their troops having advanced near to Chester in February, effected a lodgement in Christleton, and were with difficulty expelled after a struggle in which one hundred and forty soldiers, mostly Cheshire men, were slain. The entire of Boughton was burnt down the next day, to prevent its again affording any facilities to the enemy, who were encamped in the immediate neighbourhood. The city remained comparatively quiet and free from attack until the month of September following, when a large party of the forces that were besieging Beeston suddenly marched in the night to Chester, and demanded the immediate surrender of the City and Castle. Before an answer could be returned, the assailants, who had divided their forces, made a simultaneous attack upon the four quarters of the city, and got posses-

sion of St. John's Church, and all the remaining parts of the suburbs, in fact of everything without the walls, including the house of the mayor, where they found the regalia of the city, which was forwarded to Parliament. In their attack upon the walls, they were, however, repulsed and their future operations were confined to a siege of many months' duration. The early part of this siege is distinguished by little beyond the length of the correspondence between the Parliamentary Officers and the Governor of the city—a correspondence remarkable only for the acrimony of the besieging enemy, and the steady determination of the garrison not to surrender except on terms consistent with their honour and loyalty.

The situation of the inhabitants was at this time most distressing; all that remained of the outworks was in possession of the enemy, and the walls constituted their only defence. A weekly levy of one hundred pounds for the support of the garrison was made upon the citizens, which limited as their trade and resources then were, and burthened with the support of those, who from the destruction of their houses and property had been driven into the city, was severely felt; and the difficulty experienced in the collection of the tax was so great that in many instances soldiers were employed to enforce its payment. The adjacent parts of the county were equally distressed; the houses of many of the leading gentry had been burned, and their estates only secured to them by payment of immense fines, others had been confiscated; many villages had been destroyed, most of the churches had been plundered, and the neighbourhood was quite unable to render any assistance. A general feeling of gloom and depression prevailed:

"Liverpool," says Dr. Williams, Archbishop of York, who had garrisoned Conway Castle for the king, in a Letter to the Marquis of Ormonde, "remains sore besieged, and the Governor and I have made bold with your Excellency's pinnacle and servant, Capt. Lloyd, to attempt the relieving thereof with victuals from Beaumaris. God Almighty speed him, for from Chester is little hope. Worrall is all lost to the country, and plundered to the ground, by Sir William Brereton."

Even the spirit of Arthur Trevor seems to have broken down, for he writes to the Marquis:

"Since our misfortunes brought us from Lancashire we have had our dangers, and are now almost in despair, Liverpool being beyond hope besieged, and this place, (Chester,) so beset that we cannot go a mile out of doors, and to make us perfect in despair, yesterday all our ammunition, being about thirty-five barrels, were taken from us near Montgomery Castle, which I hear is to be given up to the rebels."

The citizens continued entirely occupied in defensive operations, for nothing of importance could be effected against an enemy superior in numbers, and quartered at their gates. At length they were gladdened by the welcome news that the king was on his march with reinforcements for their relief; the exultation of the citizens at this intelligence is represented as having been unbounded, they anticipated an easy and complete victory over the enemy, against whom their long and extreme sufferings had greatly embittered them. But their anticipations were grievously disappointed. On the 26th Sept. the king dispatched Sir Marmaduke Langdale with the greater part of his cavalry across the river Dee, at Holt, intending to attack the enemy in the rear, while the garrison sallying out would thus surround the besiegers. On the evening of that day Charles entered the city with the remainder of the cavalry and his infantry, amid the shouts and acclamations of the soldiers and citizens. Sir Marmaduke encamped his forces on Rowton Heath, about two miles from the city, where on the following day he was defeated with great loss, by the Parliamentary forces. His orders were to beat Poyntz, which he had accomplished, but the remissness of the king or his generals\* in not supporting Sir Marmaduke, led to the most distressing results; Charles had the mortification to witness from the Phoenix Tower, and afterwards from the roof of the

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\* It is evident that considerable dissension prevailed among the commanders of the royalists for a long time. This is often alluded to in the letters to Lord Ormonde. The archbishop of York writes from Conway, 30th Oct., 1644, "The sheriff of this county, (Carnarvonshire,) one Jones, of more boldness than wit, does what he can to hinder corn being carried thither without a license from lord Byron, (that is some skantling profit to himself,) seized the last week upon a Scotch bark with salt, with a pass from your Excellency; and I fear me, this heady man, linked in faction with sir John Mennes, will utterly destroy all trading in these parts; howbeit, I do, and will as long as I am entrusted, keep this post free from their concussions." "Chester," adds the archbishop, "was set upon on Monday last, and the outworks entered, but regained again; fourteen of the enemy killed, who are not retired far from the works. It is thought the city is full of disaffected persons, and certain it is, they do not love their present governor; as it is also that the enemy know too well what little accord there is between Legge and the prince's creatures, with that poor lord who commands, or who should command in chief in those parts, a most worthy man, but unfortunately matched in his government." But the archbishop was himself by no means a favourite. Mennes complains much of his Grace: "I often fear the prelate interposes too much." Trevor writes more plainly to the marquis, when he adds, "My lord Byron is infinitely unfortunate, and hath now finished with your Excellency, that is to say, made an end of all your lordship's army unto a man, without any the least service; and truly, my lord, people now begin to speak out, and say those troops were trifled away by my lord Byron. The last night, the enemy possessed themselves of Birkett House, in Worrall, wherein we had a small garrison for the securing of the passage from hence to Liverpool, which will now be much more straightened than formerly, and I am afraid will not long hold out. By this your Excellency will soon make your own judgement of Chester and the parts adjacent, being upon the matter on all hands besieged. We reckon upon no friend but the marquis of Ormonde. London is so great an attractive, that we despair of the king. Chester, 23d September, 1644." May not the disastrous battle of Rowton in the following year be attributed to these dissensions?



Cathedral, the total route of his forces. Upwards of six hundred men were killed, among whom was the young Earl of Lichfield, the third brother of that family whose lives were sacrificed in the royal cause.

None of the historians that have related the military operations of this day, have impugned the gallantry of the royal troops, or the conduct of their leader; nor has the cause of the failure of Sir Marmaduke Langdale's enterprize been generally stated. The fact, however, is indisputable, that the defeat resulted from the mismanagement of the king, or his commanders, in not supporting Sir Marmaduke: probably the following statement will be found to be the most accurate account of the negligence of the royal officers. It was written on a blank leaf of Clarendon's History of the Rebellion, (now in the library of Sir Charles Shakerley, Bart.) by the son of Sir Geoffrey Shakerley, who commanded a regiment of horse under Langdale.

"The heath upon which Sir Marmaduke Langdale was drawn up, carries the name of Rowton Heath, a mile beyond which, in the London Road from Chester, is another heath, called Hatton Heath. The order which Sir Marmaduke had received from the king was, to beat Poyntz back. Sir Marmaduke performed the same effectually, for having marched his men over Holt Bridge undiscovered by the enemy, who had taken the outworks and suburbs of the city on the east side thereof; and Poyntz coming in a marching posture along the narrow lane between Hatton Heath and Rowton Heath, Sir Marmaduke having lined the hedges fell upon him and killed a great many of his men, and having so done ordered Col. Shakerley, who was best acquainted with that country, to get the next way he could to the king, who lodged then at Sir Francis Gamul's house in Chester, and acquaint him that he had obeyed his orders in beating Poyntz back, and to know his Majesty's further pleasure. His colonel executed his orders with better speed than could be expected, for he galloped directly to the river Dee, under Huntingdon House, got a wooden tub, used for slaughtering of swine, and a batting staff used for the batting of coarse linen, for an oar, put a servant into the tub with him, and in this desperate manner swam over the river, his horse swimming by him, (for the banks there were very steep and the river very deep) and ordered his servant to stay there with the tub for his return. He was with the king in little more than a quarter of an hour after he left Sir Marmaduke, and acquainted the king that if his majesty pleased to command further orders to Sir Marmaduke, he would engage to deliver them in a quarter of an hour, and told the king of the expeditious method he had taken, which saved him the going nine or ten miles about, by Holt Bridge (for the boats at Eaton were then made useless;) but such delays were used by some about the king that no orders were sent, nor any sally made out of the city by the king's party, till past three o'clock in the afternoon, which was full six hours after Poyntz had been beaten back; and so Poyntz having all that time for his men to recover

their fright that they had been put into in the morning, Poyntz rallied his forces, and with the help of the Parliament forces, who came out of the suburbs of the city to his assistance, (upon whom the king's party in the city might then successfully have fallen) put all those of the king's to the route, which was the loss of the king's horse, and of his design to join Montrose in Scotland, who was then understood to be in good condition. This is what my father, the said Colonel Shakerley (afterwards Sir Geoffrey Shakerley,) hath often declared in my hearing; and since no mention is made of him in all this history,—(though he faithfully served the king in all the wars, was personally engaged in almost all the field battles for the king, sold part of his estate to support that service, and was for many years sequestered of all the rest)—I thought it my duty as his eldest son and heir, to do that justice to his memory, to insert this here that it may be remembered to posterity.

PETER SHAKERLEY."

The city being now deemed no longer a place of security for the unfortunate monarch, the royal fugitive took his departure, and after incurring considerable risk, arrived at Denbigh Castle, accompanied by Sir Francis Gamul, and Alderman Cowper, who had been his attendants during his short sojourn in Chester. These loyal citizens remained with the king two days, and then having taken a sad and final leave of their unhappy master returned to Chester, which they found in a more distressed state than when they left it, for in that short interval several batteries had been raised, and the besiegers had effected a breach in the walls near the Newgate, at which they made several assaults on the city. But repulsed in these attacks, the parliamentary commander despaired of taking the city by assault and converted the siege into a close blockade; to render which more effective, the besieging troops were reinforced by those that had been employed at the reduction of Lathom house.

The enthusiasm of the garrison was, however, wound up to the highest pitch, no sufferings seemed to have damped their zeal; nor were the citizens less disposed to endure the general calamity with patience and fortitude. By the following description, given by the second Randle Holme, it would appear the female portion of the community particularly distinguished themselves: "By this time the women are all on fire, striving through a gallant emulation to outdo our men, and will make good our yielding walls, or lose their lives to show they dare attempt it. The work goes forward, and they, like so many valiant amazons, do outface death, and dare danger, though it lurk in every basket; seven are shot and three slain, yet they scorn to leave their matchless undertaking, and thus they continued for ten days' space, possessing the beholders that they

are immaculate! Our ladies likewise, like so many exemplary goddesses, created a matchless forwardness in the meaner sorts, by their daily undertakings, that he who saw them would have thought a hundred suns eclipsed or at leastways clouded with the loyal dust, had he been in that place, which they wipe off with such a pleasant smile, that they seem rather silent solicitors of a new deformity, than willing partners with that purchased honour."

During the winter of the year 1645-6, the garrison and citizens continued in a state of great destitution, absolutely wanting the common necessities of life. The disaffected in the city availed themselves of the discontent thus excited, to spread a rumour that the governor and the principal officers fared plenteously amid the general distress; to remove this feeling, Lord Byron and several of the commissioners alternately invited the leaders of the malcontents to dine with them, entertaining them with their usual diet of boiled corn for dinner, and water for drink. The result of this was to disabuse the minds of the citizens; confidence and courage were restored, and they unanimously determined to hold out to the last extremity.

Great exertions had been made by the royalists to obtain relief for the garrisons of Chester and North Wales, from Ireland, but in almost every instance their efforts were frustrated by the superior naval force of their opponents. The Ormonde correspondence frequently refers to these fruitless attempts. The Marquis in a letter to the Archbishop of York, dated May, 1644, writes,

"When Colonel Trafford was ready to embark himself and 300 good, well-armed men, above 20 barrels of powder with match proportionable, and six pieces of iron ordnance, well fitted, being aboard of Captain John Bartlett, all for the defence of Anglesey, there arrived two parliament ships and a frigate to hinder this preparation, made at my very great and particular charge. I have since tried from other ports to send them away, but the too good intelligence those ships have, from their friends on shore, of all our motions, makes me unwilling to hazard such good men and provisions."

The Marquis had previously been more fortunate in his efforts to provide for the troops of the Archbishop, for in a letter from Oxford the prelate writes,

"I humbly thank your excellency for your continual care of those parts wherein I sojourn; but what arms or ammunition are fallen to Chester or to Lord Byron's hands, are gone thither *unde negant redire quicquam*, from whence we of Wales shall have no return of anything, but must depend on your excellency's further charity towards us, upon some opportunity of transportation."

At length, after having been compelled to feed upon horses, dogs, and cats, so pressing had their situation become, they entered into articles of capitulation, on the 3rd February, 1646;—these articles, the result of six days' deliberation, were most honourable to the citizens, who had for three long years been exposed to all the horrors of anticipated war, and for many months enclosed within their walls.

The incessant drains upon their property, in the shape of levies for the maintenance of the garrison, and the support of the fugitive monarch, had levelled the different classes of the community, and reduced the citizens to one common condition, that of beggary: desolation and destruction marked the suburbs, which presented an undistinguished mass of ruins, the only remains of buildings once the peaceful habitations of content and security, while the walls and public edifices within the city had been either defaced or battered down by the Parliamentary cannon. The city lands were all mortgaged, the funds quite exhausted, the plate melted down, and the churches, particularly that of St. John, having been so long in the possession of the enemy, much injured.

Randle Holme, who was an eye witness to these devastations, having been mayor in the year 1643, gives the following detailed account of the damage the city received:

“ Thus of the most anchante and famouse citie of Chester in times past, but now behold and marke the ruins of it in these present times, within these few years, namely, from 1643, 1644, 1645, the particular demolitions of it, now most grievous to the spectators, and more woofull to the inhabitants thereof:

IMPRIMIS, without the barrs the chapelle of Spittle with all the houses and gardens and edifices there;

ITEM, all the houses, barnes, and buildings, near to the Barrs, with Great Boughton and Christleton;

ITEM, in the Foregate Street, Cow Lane, St. John's Lane, with other houses in the same street, all burned to the ground;

ITEM, without the Foregate, from the said gate to the last house, Jolly's Hall, all burned and consumed to the ground, with all the lanes in the same, with the chappelle of Little St. John not to be found;

ITEM, from Dee Bridge, over the water, all that long street called Handbridge, with all the lanes, barnes, and buildings about it, ruinated to the ground;

ITEM, all the glovers' houses under the walles of the citie, all pulled down to the ground;

ITEM, all the buildings and houses at the Watergate, upon the Roode, pulled down to the ground;

ITEM, besides all the famous houses of gentlemen in the same citie, and near unto adjoining, viz: the Bach Hall, Mr. Whitbie's, those of sir William Brereton,\* sir Randall Crewe, sir Thomas Smith, Bretton Hall, and others, [which he enumerates,] the Water Tower, the Mills, and other property destroyed; the lord Cholmondeley's Hall in St. John's Church yard, with the ruins of the said church.

ITEM, the destruction of divers of the houses in the citie, with granadoes, too tedious to recite;

ITEM, the ruins of stalls, pentices, doores, trees, and barnes, in divers lanes and places in the citie;

ITEM, the destroying of the bishop's palace, with stables in the barne-yard, and the ruins of the great church.

ITEM, The drawing dry of the citie's stocks, plates, rents, and collections, not knowne, all which losses, charges, and demolishments, in opinion of most, will amount to two hundred thousand pounds att the least: so far hath the God of heaven humbled this famous citie."

Immediately after the surrender of Chester, orders were issued by the Parliament for its future regulation. One of the aldermen was appointed mayor, and the sword and mace were restored to the citizens; but contrary to the tenth article of the treaty, which enacted that "no church within the city, or evidence or writings belonging to the same, shall be defaced," the bigotry of the parliamentary forces led them to pull down the high cross, break the stained glass, and remove the fonts from most of the churches, and also to injure the organ, and other parts of the cathedral.

Upon the execution of Charles I. his son was proclaimed a traitor at the principal public places in Chester. The royal arms were removed from the County Hall, and those of the Earls from the Exchequer Court, by order of Bradshaw, who had been appointed Chief Justice of Chester; and two years afterwards the Bishop's palace with all the furniture were sold to Robert Mallor and William Richardson, for £1059.

The support of so large an army as that of the Parliament, had fallen heavily upon the public treasury, and in order to replenish it, an order was issued to raise £60,000 per month, to which Cheshire was only rated at £39 13s. 11d. while Lancashire was required to contribute £529 3s. 2d.; even the town of Hull was rated at £50 18s. 9d.

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\* The "*Nunes hall*," the residence of Sir William Brereton, being within the city walls, would doubtless be destroyed in revenge for the injuries he had inflicted upon the city and county; as would also Bretton Hall, in consequence of its being the seat of Mr. Ravenscroft, who had obtained a quantity of ammunition from the garrison. See pp. 99-100.

In consequence of some movement in Scotland hostile to the parliament, in August, 1650, it was ordered that four regiments of foot be immediately raised in Cheshire. A commission was issued to the sheriff of the county, to Warburton, then one of the justices of the Common Pleas, Sir George Booth, Sir William Brereton, Sir Henry Delves, Colonel Duckenfield, Colonel Henry Bradshaw, and others, requiring their attendance forthwith, to enquire into conspiracies, to disarm the papists, and to adopt such other measures as might be deemed requisite to strengthen the parliamentary interests in this county. By this tribunal ten persons were condemned, of whom five were executed at Chester, and in the following year James, the seventh earl of Derby, Sir Timothy Featherstonaugh, and Capt. John Benbow were added to the list of their victims.

After the battle of Worcester, on the 3rd Sept. 1651, the Earl of Derby having taken measures for the concealment and safety of the king, returned towards the north. He was accompanied by Lord Lauderdale and about forty other persons, but on his way through Cheshire, he was made prisoner by Major Edge under a promise of quarter for life. In violation of this guarantee he was brought to trial at Chester, before a court composed of the military members of the commission, charged with having violated the "act prohibiting correspondence with Charles Stuart or his party," and although he pleaded the conditions under which he surrendered himself, he was convicted of treason against the commonwealth and sentenced to be executed. It was not among the christian virtues of those times to forgive enemies. In four days after his trial, his lordship was brought to the block at Bolton,\* and died professing his attachment to a prince, whose future reign proved that he was unworthy of so devoted a subject.

In consequence of the plague then raging in Liverpool a watch was placed on the

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\* In a work which has just made its appearance, called "Tracts relating to military proceedings in Lancashire during the Great Civil War," it is stated, in reference to the siege of Lathom House, and its gallant defence by the countess of Derby, that the parliamentary commander, Rigby, hoped to terrify the countess by insolent bravadoes:—"Thursday, hee sends his last message, as hee calls it, a furious su'mons to her La'pp to yield upp *Lathom House*, all the p'sons, goods, and armes within it, into his hands, to receive the mercy of the parliament, and to return her final answr the next day before 2 o'clock; wch her La'pp haveing read, with a brave indignation calls for the drum, and tells him, 'a due regard for his paynes is to be hang'd upp at her gates; but,' says she, 'thou art but a foolish instrument of traytors' pride: carry this answr backe to Rigby,' (with a noble scorne teareing the paper in his sight,) 'tell that insolent rebell, hee shall neither have p'sons, goods, nor house; when our strength and p'vision is spent, we shall find a fire more mercyfull than Rigby; and then, if the providence of God p'vent it not, my goods and house shall burne in his sight: myselfe, children, and souldiers, rather than fall into his hands, will seale our religion and loyalty in the same flame;' wch being spoken aloud in her souldiers' hearing, they broke out into shouts and acclamations of joy, closeing all w'th this generall voyce, 'Wee'll dye for his M'atie and your Honour—God save the King!'" In revenge for the sufferings of the Countess, Prince Rupert stormed Bolton,

gates, and every precaution adopted to prevent the contagion reaching the city. The inhabitants had previously suffered severely from a pestilence, occasioned by the habitual neglect of public cleanliness, and the great number of people that had been cooped up within the walls during the siege; this former plague raged with such destructive fury, that between the 22nd June, 1648, and the 20th April following, no less than 2099 persons died in Chester alone.

Although Cromwell, as lord protector of the commonwealth, had granted the hospital of St. John, with various lands and estates to the mayor, aldermen, and citizens of Chester, their unshaken loyalty had rendered them so obnoxious to the parliament, that on the discovery of an insurrectionary movement in the county, orders were issued to dissolve the corporation, and place the government in the hands of a military commander. The royalists in various parts of the kingdom, were anxious for the restoration of the exiled monarch; and the imbecility of Richard, the son of Cromwell, who inherited none of his father's ambition, and only a small share of his talents, appeared to present them with a favourable opportunity for carrying their wishes into effect, soon after the death of the Protector. Charles entered warmly into the scheme, and repaired, with his brother James, to Calais, the more readily to communicate with his friends in England. The plot was, however, discovered by Sir Richard Willis, a person high in the confidence of the Lord Chancellor Hyde, (afterwards Clarendon,) but who, after being long the paid agent of Cromwell, continued his

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where his soldiers were guilty of scandalous atrocities, to which they were said—though we believe falsely—to have been instigated by the Earl of Derby. \* \* \* \* \* The earl of Derby was taken by the parliamentarians after the battle of Worcester, tried by a court-martial at Chester, and sentenced to be beheaded at Bolton. Great interest was made to procure him a pardon, but in vain; from his own letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons, it is evident that his supposed share in Prince Rupert's cruelties, was the chief cause of the severity with which he was treated:—"Sr, it is a greater affliction to me than death itselfe, that I am sentenced to die at Bolton; so that the nation will looke upon me as a sacrifice for that blood wch some have unjustly cast upon me, and from wch I hope I am acquitted in your opinions, and the judgement of good men, having cleared my selfe by undeniable evidence. Indeed, at my triall it was never mentioned against me, and yet they adjudge me to suffer at Bolton, as if indeed I had bin guilty. I beg a respite for my life on that issue, yet if I doe not acquit my selfe from that imputation, let me die without mercy." The scaffold was erected at the cross of Bolton, and was built of the timber taken from his own house of Lathom. Various dying speeches have been reported, but the following is believed to be a true account of his last moments:—"There was not above a hundred lookers on besides soldiers; presently after his coming on the scaffold, there happened a great tumult, (the occasion thereof not being certainly known,) in appeasing of which there were some cut, many hurt, and one childe killed. The earle was no good orator, and the tumult put him out of speaking what he intended; he was much afraid of being reviled by the people of the town, but they rather pitied his condition; his son came with him to Bolton, and carried his corps back that night to Wiggan. 15th October, 1651."—*Tracts relating to Military Proceedings in Lancashire during the Great Civil War.*

services to the parliament. Most of the conspirators, in the different counties, were thrown into prison, on the day previously to that appointed for their assembling. "On the other hand, the most tempestuous weather continued the whole day fixed by the king and the duke, so that it was impossible for them to join their friends; while others were deterred from doing so by fear and superstition, at an incident so unusual in summer."

The only part of the project, which was in the least successful, was in Cheshire, where, under the direction of Sir George Booth,\* a large portion of the gentry of the county arrayed themselves against the parliament. That insurrection, "which indeed looked formidable, was the rising of Sir George Booth in Cheshire, who was a secluded member of the parliament; with him appeared Lord Kilmorey, Mr. Needham, brother of the said lord, Mr. Henry and Mr. Peter Booth, a member likewise, Sir William Niel, Mr. Randal Egerton, an eminent constant loyalist, who brought his former eminent valour upon this stage, and Colonel Werdern, of the same party. Sir Thomas Middleton and his sons, who garrisoned Chirk and Harding (*Hawarden*) Castles; there joined also with him, the Earl of Derby, (whose family interest in the county, with the same magnanimous loyalty, this young nobleman essayed to resuscitate, and gave great demonstrations of his personal worth and gallantry in the ensuing engagement,) Colonel Gilbert Ireland, who seized Liverpool, Mr. Warburton, Mr. Leigh, the Lord Cholmondeley, Mr. (now Sir) Geoffrey Shakerley, and others; these rendezvoused at Rowton Heath, and appeared to the number of three thousand and upwards, where a declaration was read, that they took up arms for a free and full parliament, and to unyoke the nation from those men at Westminster." *Heath's Chronicles*, vol. i. 210.

Although disappointed by the non-arrival of many of his promised supporters, Sir George seized the city of Chester, and was only prevented obtaining possession of the Castle, by the resolute defence of the governor, Colonel Croxton. The parliament, alarmed at these proceedings, sent Lambert, with several regiments from Ireland, against

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\* "Sir George Booth was a person of one of the best fortunes and interest in Cheshire, and for the memory of his grandfather, of absolute power with the Presbyterians; he was thrice member for the county, but during the civil wars, espoused the cause of the parliament, and was included with Sir William Brereton in a parliamentary order for arming the county, and seizing on the warlike stores of the king's friends. But, as has frequently been the case, and was singularly illustrated in that of General Monk, he abjured the cause in which he had embarked, and became as warm a supporter of the Royalists as he had before been of the Roundheads. Early in 1659, he received a commission from the king, then at Brussels, by which he was appointed commander of the king's forces in Cheshire, Lancashire, and North Wales."—*Clarendon's History*.



him; on which Booth, as Clarendon says, from his natural impetuosity, instead of defending himself in the city, hastened to meet him in the country, where he was easily routed. "On the 11th August, Sir George Booth took quarters at Townsend, the seat of the Wilbrahams, and on the Monday following, they were occupied by Lambert, who staid there three days to refresh his men, and then coming up with him, defeated him on the 19th August at Winnington Bridge near Delamere." *Vide the Wilbraham MSS.*

Upon intelligence of this victory reaching parliament, large rewards were conferred upon Lambert, Croxton, and others who had contributed to the defeat of the royalists and the preservation of the Castle; a day was also set apart for a "public thanksgiving for the great mercy thus vouchsafed to the Commonwealth." Many of the leading families suffered severely in consequence of the part they had taken in this movement; an act was passed for sequestering the estates of Sir Thomas Middleton, Sir George Booth, Randal Egerton, Robert Werdern, and many of their adherents; great numbers of whom were confined in the prisons, which were thus filled with the open and secret enemies of the parliament.\* A plan was even proposed for transporting the families of the royalists to Barbadoes, Jamaica, and other colonies, in order that their "malignant affections might not be perpetuated in this country." The *Mercurius Politicus*, of 7th September, after announcing that "this week an exact account was brought from Chester of such persons of quality as are detained there," enumerates about one hundred, in which occur the names of Grosvenor, Cholmondeley, Egerton, Broughton, Cotton, Kilmorey, Brooks, Massey, Stanley, and many of the leading aristocracy of the county. The act for the sequestration of the estates, declared all the previous charters of Chester null and void; and it decreed, that the city should in future have no separate jurisdiction, but be merged in the county. This vote of parliament was, however, declared void in the following February, and Charles the Second, a few

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\* The capture of Sir George Booth is thus described in the *Mercurius Politicus*, No. 583, dated Whitehall, 24th August, 1659. "He came last night to an Inn at Newport-Pagnel in Bedfordshire, in hopes to have escaped to London, and had four attendants in the habit of servants. Behind one of these persons, Sir George rode in the habit of a gentlewoman; but alighting at the inn, he acted the woman's part not so well but that he was soon suspected, and the matter being examined, he at length acknowledged himself, and being secured, he was, about four o'clock this morning, conducted from that town towards London. He was met on the road beyond Highgate by some of our horse, and by them carried to the tower, whither Sir Arthur Heselrigge and Sir Henry Vane repaired this evening to take his examination. The other persons who personated his servants being detained at Newport till further notice."

years after the restoration, confirmed the charter of Henry VII., renewing all the ancient rights and privileges of the citizens.

A desire to remove the mayor and some other officers, who were opposed to the introduction of the Roman Catholics, and anxious to exclude the Duke of York from the succession to the crown, induced Charles toward the latter part of his reign to cause an information, in the nature of a *quo warranto*, to be filed against the corporation, with a view to the dissolution of that body. The neglect of the civic officers in the course of the legal proceedings, caused the loss of their franchise; of which James afterwards availed himself in displacing all those members that were not devoted to his interests.

The vacillating conduct of this illfated monarch, James II., was perhaps never more strongly instanced than in his proceedings relative to this city. It was only on the 12th August, 1688, that he issued the order in council for the removal of the mayor and other officers,—yet in the course of the same month his attorney-general was instructed to prepare “a bill for the incorporation of the inhabitants of Chester.” On the 26th of the next month, by letters patent, the citizens and inhabitants were accordingly incorporated, the king appointing Sir William Stanley the first mayor, and other officers, reserving to himself the right of their removal. James soon afterwards, although too late, became convinced of the necessity of ingratiating himself with the people, in order to sustain his falling throne; and with that object he issued, on the 17th October “*A Royal Proclamation for restoring Corporations to their ancient Charters, Liberties, Rights, and Franchises*,” and by letters patent under the great seal, commonly called the Charter of Restitution, bearing date the 26th October, William Street was replaced in the civic chair, from which he had been removed by Sir William Stanley; and Sir William Williams, the Earl of Derby, Sir Thomas Grosvenor, and others, were severally reinstated in their former offices of recorder and aldermen.

The great charter of Henry VII. being in effect thus confirmed, the government of the city continued under its provisions until the passing of the Municipal Reform Act, all intermediate legislation having been confined to police regulations. These enactments being contained in various acts of Parliament, some of which from their titles, appear to have had little connection with civic affairs,\* were the source of

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\* Such as the 26, George II. entitled “An Act for the stopping of a distemper in horned cattle;” which appoints the day for the election of the Mayor, Sheriffs, and other officers of the city of Chester.

much inconvenience, to remedy which they were, in 1803, consolidated in one act.

In August, 1683, James, Duke of Monmouth, arrived at Chester with a retinue of upwards of one hundred horse, apparently on purposes of pleasure, but actually in furtherance of one of the many schemes to prevent the succession of the Duke of York. He was received with the greatest enthusiasm, the streets were illuminated with flambeaux, and the bells of the church loudly proclaimed his welcome; but the populace seem to have evinced a singular mode of showing their respect for the duke, as "they pelted the doors of the houses of gentlemen in the city with stones, and otherwise damaged the same; they furiously forced the doors of the cathedral, and destroyed most of the painted glass, burst open the little vestries and cupboards, where were the surplices and hoods belonging to the clergy, which they rent to rags, and they beat to pieces the baptismal font, pulled down some monuments, attempted to demolish the organ, and committed other most enormous outrages, and published a most seditious placard." The duke proceeded to the races at Wallasey,\* on his return from which the tumultuous proceedings were renewed, and they did not cease until several of his attendants were arrested, and security taken for their appearance and good behaviour. Notwithstanding the assertion of several writers that these disturbances were very trifling, that "the city presented a vast field of joy, alloyed only by the puerile attempts of the disaffected to the church establishment, who beat the boys in the streets, and put out the bonfires, and that they were soon obliged to desist," [*Henshall*, 165.] it is evident they must have been of considerable importance, for on the 17th Sept. the grand jury of the county presented that "security of the peace be demanded from all concerned in promoting the aforesaid seditious address, or in aiding the riotous reception of the Duke of Monmouth and his confederates, and all frequenters of conventicles, and harbourers or countenancers of any nonconformist minister," and particularly from the four baronets, Mainwaring, Cotton, Aston, and Bellot, and about sixty other parties, many of high respectability, amongst whom were Whitmore of Thurstaston, Glegge of Gayton, and others, at or near to whose residences the duke had been during his short sojourn in Wirral.

Chester has continued to enjoy an almost uninterrupted state of repose since the restoration of Charles II., for in the rebellions of 1715 and 1745, she can hardly be said to have participated. In the former, the rebels did not penetrate to the southward

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\* This will be more particularly referred to under the head of WALLASEY.

of Preston, "whence Lord Charles Murray, son of the Duke of Athol, with several gentlemen, and a great number of private men were brought prisoners and confined in Chester Castle;" and in the latter, notwithstanding the greater vigour, more extensive preparations, and the more active movements of the young Chevalier, as Prince Charles Edward was designated by the partizans of the Stuarts,—or the Pretender, as he was more generally called, Chester was equally successful in escaping the horrors of domestic warfare. Upon the first intimation of the approach of Charles, the Earl of Cholmondeley, then lord lieutenant of the county, and governor of the city, adopted the most active measures for its defence. Additional troops were added to the garrison, which consisted of two Dutch and two English regiments; these were principally quartered in private houses, the owners of which were ordered to provide themselves with supplies of provisions. Strong guards patrolled the walls night and day, and advanced parties were placed in the suburbs; several of the gates were partially built up, buildings were taken down, the fortifications repaired; large quantities of ammunition and other military stores provided, and the citadel and the town made as tenable as time would permit. But fortunately these precautions were unnecessary: having advanced to Manchester and there refreshed his troops, it was the intention of the Pretender to have proceeded to Chester; but upon discovering that the bridges over the Mersey had been broken down, he marched towards Derby, where he received intelligence that the Duke of Cumberland, the king's brother, was at Lichfield, at the head of a considerable force. Upon receipt of this information Derby was abandoned, and on the 6th December, he commenced his retreat from that town to Scotland; a retreat which has been rendered memorable by its accomplishment in the short space of fourteen days, in the midst of winter, and without any material loss of men, cannon, or baggage. After the subsequent reverses of the rebels, sixteen cart loads of prisoners were brought to Chester, by whom the castle was so filled, that the spring assizes could not be held at the usual place, but were adjourned to Flookersbrook, near the present railway stations.

Chester at a very remote period, doubtless enjoyed a considerable share of the traffic of the northern and western part of Britain. The existence of the markets and fairs so early as the time of Earl Lupus, is distinctly proved by his grant to Nigel, Baron of Halton, of the tolls of the market, and the control of the streets and roads during

the time of the fair: Lucian also has given a description of the commerce of the City at the time he wrote—soon after the conquest. The increasing intercourse between this country and Wales, and also with Ireland, must have been favourable to the prosperity of Chester and tended to an extension of its traffic. There were not in those days however, any “blue books” printed, nor were any financial returns published, to which reference can now be made, to ascertain the quantities or values of their imports and exports. Information, similar to that which may hereafter be derived from the works of a Porter, a Martin, a M’Gregor, or a Cæsar-Moreau, must now be gathered from parties of a very different character, and for the details of the statist, the rhyme of the poet must be substituted. In the latter we read that in the reign of Henry VI.\* the principal imports into Chester were

*Hides and fish, salmon, hake, herrings,  
 Irish wooll and linnen cloth, faldinge;  
 And martens† good be her merchandise.  
 Hertes hides and others of benetie;  
 Skins of otter, squirrel, and Irish hare,  
 Of sheep, lambe and fore, is her chaffere,  
 Fellen of kiddes and conies great plentie.*

Chester had then, in fact, attained such importance, that it had undoubtedly become the capital of this part of the kingdom. Afterwards, in consequence of the inefficient and unnavigable state of the Dee, the trade of the city began to decline, and it was found necessary, about the middle of the fifteenth century, to construct a quay at Shotwich, which was followed by the formation of another at Parkgate, in the reign of Elizabeth. In 1674 the port was in so deplorable a state, and so choked up with sand, that a vessel of twenty tons could not reach the city, the ships being obliged to anchor at Neston, ten miles distant. The continued misfortunes of the port of Chester at length gave rise to the prosperity of Liverpool, at this time a very inconsiderable place; “it began to discover its own advantages of situation, and quickly emerged from its then despicable state to its present flourishing condition.” ‡

\* See a poem dated in 1430, published in the first volume of Hackluyt, p. 199.

† Martin Skins are mentioned in the Domesday Survey, see appendix, pp. 4 and 5.

‡ So wrote Mr. Pennant in 1778. In that year the number of vessels that entered Liverpool was 2292, yielding a revenue to the port of £4649 7s. 7d. In the year ending 24th June, 1844, the number that entered was 16,606 which paid for *Dock duties*, £96,457 11s. 7d. and their cargoes, £91,840 10s. 6d.; in addition to which, the *Town's dues* paid for the year ending February, 1844, was £72,517 19s. 4d., exhibiting, in less than seventy years, an increase of nearly sixty times the amount of Port revenue.

Notwithstanding the variety of meetings that have been held, and of plans that have been suggested, for the improvement of the port, and the extension of the commerce of Chester, it has gradually dwindled down to a great degree of insignificance. Much benefit was expected to accrue from the formation of the railways which connect the City with Liverpool, and with London, by the Birkenhead and the Crewe lines, but hitherto these anticipations do not seem to have been realized. The construction of Railways between Chester and Holyhead, and to the North Wales Mineral Districts, has long been a favourite measure with the citizens, and as the requisite Parliamentary sanction has been recently obtained, they now look forward to their completion with much anxiety.

The origin of the Monastery of Chester is unknown, but its great antiquity is undoubted. Bradshaw states, but without giving any authority, that upon the introduction of the Christian Religion into Cheshire by Lucius, about the year 140, a church was built at Chester, and dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, and that it continued the mother church for Chester, and the surrounding country, within a circuit of seven miles, for upwards of three centuries. He also mentions, that of the three Archbishops appointed by Lucius to preside over the affairs of the church, the second in dignity ruled over North Wales, and had his residence in the City of Legions; and in this he is confirmed by Roger de Hoveden, who describes Chester, while under the dominion of the Britons, as being a bishop's see. It is also stated, in the "Ancient Records of Freemasonry," that the Christian faith was first preached at Caerleon, by Amphibalus, a Roman, about the year 300; and that it was he who converted Albanus or St. Alban, the first that suffered martyrdom in Britain, in 303. Dr. Ormerod, quoting an extract from an ancient manuscript, formerly in the possession of Henry Ferrars, Esq., but now printed in the "Monasticon," says, that "The Kynge Egbryht, for the wollenesse that was in Sent Modwen, betoke to hur his dowghtur Edythe to noryche, and to kepe, and to informe hur, after the reule of Sent Benett, and after to veyle his dowghtur of the Boschoppe of Chester."

Much of these accounts is evidently fabulous, and more probably alludes to the Bishops of Mercia, under the designation of Bishops of Chester, for the similarity of the Saxon names of Chester and of Leicester,\* where the Mercian prelates had a Cathedral,

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\* Leicester was called Legerciestre, Legerceastre; and Chester, Legecestre, Legeacestre.

may have misled the ancient writers ; indeed, so many variations occur in the best authorities, relative to the foundation of the ancient convent, that it has been a fruitful theme for the antiquaries of the County during the last two centuries. After a careful examination of the various documents bearing on the subject, a writer of considerable ability in *THE VALE ROYAL*, (*King's*) observes, "Touching the original foundation of the monastery, there is not anything that I have seen from our historians or records, which may make a perfect discovery thereof. But by circumstances, I do conclude that Wulpherus, King of Mercia, who flourished about the year of Christ, 660, perceiving his daughter Werburgh much disposed to a religious life, caused her to be veiled, and first built it for her and such other pious ladies as resolved to dedicate their lives to the service of God therein ; and William of Malmesbury, an ancient author and of great credit, speaking of this devout virgin, saith that she was buried at Chester in the monastery there, afterwards re-edified by Earl Hugh." The daughter of Wulpherus is stated to have professed under her Aunt St. Ethelreda at Ely, and to have had the direction of several nunneries before her death, which occurred at Trentham in 690. Years after her interment, she was canonized as the patron saint of Chester, and her reliques removed from Hanbury to that city, in or about 875, upon the advance of the Danes towards Repton. (*See ante*, page 67.)

But whatever may have been the period at which the monastery, or rather nunnery was founded, it is certain that it received considerable repairs in the reign of Ethelstan. It was then almost rebuilt by Elfleda, *the Ladye of Mercia*, by whom the re-edified fabric was dedicated to the Virgin Saint and Saint Oswald, instead of its former patrons. At the same time the Nuns were displaced by a body of secular Canons, who remained, subject to occasional interruptions from the Danes, until the year 947, when King Edmund, having expelled the invaders from this part of the kingdom, firmly established Christianity within the walls of Chester. From this period the City was indisputably included in the see of Lichfield, as it most probably had been from the earliest establishment of that diocese.

Edgar, who is generally supposed to have had a palace near Chester, made\* consi-

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\* The authenticity of this Charter is however doubtful; for in a complete abstract of the Charters of Chester, now in the Harleian MSS. No. 1956, it has been interpolated on a different leaf and in a different handwriting from the others, shewing the Monks did not admit its validity.

derable grants to the Monks of this Abbey, with a view to obtain their prayers for the health of his soul and those of Edmund his father, and other of his progenitors ; and it was subsequently enriched by the munificence of Leofric, in the reign of the Confessor. The secular canons continued to occupy the monastery without molestation during the life of the Conqueror ; but in the sixth year of the reign of his son and successor, such of them as would not adopt the Benedictine Order were expelled by Earl Lupus.

Soon after the Conquest, Peter, Bishop of Lichfield,\* removed his see to Chester, making the Collegiate Church of St. John the Baptist his Cathedral. The immense riches with which the monastery of Coventry had been endowed by Leofric, Earl of Chester, induced Robert de Limesie to remove the see to that city. From that period the Church of St. John, at Chester, could not be regarded as other than Collegiate, for the dean and prebends had no voice in the election of the bishops of that see, the right being determined to be vested alternately, in the canons of Lichfield, and the friars and monks of Coventry.

All uncertainty as to the ecclesiastical affairs of Chester ceases from the completion of the *Doomsday Survey*, which contains full details of the estates and privileges of the bishops, as well as of the possessions of the church of St. Werburgh. The chronicles of Bradshaw, from that period, are not to be considered as merely traditionary ; the statement of the ancient Monk, that

The founder also beguiled within the monasterie  
Many sightly places convenient for religion,  
Compassed with strong walls on the west partie,  
And on the other syde with walls of the town,  
Closed at every end with a sure postern.  
In south part the cymitrie embowered round aboute,  
For a sure defence surmises to hold out—

is now confirmed by the Charter of Earl Lupus, dated in the sixth year of the reign of

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\* "I find no mention of a Bishop at Chester before the Norman Conquest ; only we read that Dwina, a Scotchman, was made Bishop of Mercia, by King Oswy, whereof Cheshire was a small parcel, and that he had a seat at Lichfield, Anno Christi 656, from which time there remained a succession of Bishops in that see, until by doom of the Canon Law all Bishops were to remove to the greatest cities in their Diocese."—*Polychronicon* lib. i. cap. 52. "And thereupon Peter, Bishop of Lichfield, A. D. 1075, removed his seat from Lichfield to Chester, and was commonly called Bishop of Chester. But Robert his successor leaving Chester, fixed his seat at Coventry A. D. 1095, which was brought back to Lichfield by Roger Clinton in the reign of Henry I. from which time downwards the Bishops here, were sometimes stiled of Chester, sometimes of Lichfield, and sometimes of Coventry, from the place where they fixed their residence, having then three sees, yet all one and the same Bishopric."—Sir Peter Leycester, p. 166.



William II. In the winter of the preceding year, 1092, the Earl, who was labouring under severe indisposition, invited Anselm, Abbot of Bec, from Normandy, to afford him spiritual consolation. Anselm,\* attended by his chaplain, Richard, of Bec, visited Lupus, and after his recovery assisted in the foundation of a new monastery for monks, of the regular order of St. Benett; which, under the advice and direction of Anselm, was most liberally endowed by the Earl, the Lady Ermentrude his Countess, and many of the Norman barons attached to the Earl.

Among the various estates which constituted the liberal endowments of the Abbey by Hugh Lupus, there were in Wirral only the manors of Sutton, Croughton, and Irby, with the half of Raby, and the third part of Neston, Stanney, and of Saughall: but the example of the Earl was followed by those of his barons that held property in the hundred; and the Abbot and Convent were soon enabled to enumerate among their possessions either lands in, or the manors of, Barnston, Bebington, Caldy, Chorlton, Eastham, Greasby, Lea, Ledsham, Ness, Neston, and Prenton.

Dr. Ormerod, with his usual attention to detail, has given a list of the various Abbots, from Richard the first to Thomas Clarke, the twenty-fifth and last, who, after the dissolution of monasteries, was appointed dean of Chester. The situation of abbot was often far from enviable, and the subject of frequent litigation. During the fourteen years in which it was held by Geoffrey the seventh, whose predecessor had been deposed by Earl Randal, the greater part of the church was in ruins, and an insufficiency of funds prevented the repairs being extended beyond the choir. The inroads of the Welsh had deprived the monks of a valuable rectory and two manors; and the inundations of the River Mersey, had caused fearful devastation at Ince and the shores of Wirral.

From these difficulties, the convent soon emerged, for, during the abbacy of his successor, Hugh Grylle, many grants were made to the monks, and the repairs of their church were completed. Permission was also given to extend their buildings,

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\* "Also this year Anselm, Abbot of Bacco (Bec), came out of Normandy at the request of Hughe Earle of Chester for three causes, one bycause to releve Abbeyes that he had before founded in England of grievous tribute that the Abbeyes paid to the King, the second for to vysite the Earle Hughe that was sore syke that time, the thirde bycause he should founde an Abbaye at Chester. In that place he assygned his preeste Rycharde first Abbote, and changed secular Canons into Monkes and in December, 1093, he was made Archebyshop of Canterbury."—*Ralph Higden*. Anselm, who was author of many valuable works on Divinity, died at Canterbury in 1105, having held the Primacy eleven years; in the reign of Henry VII, he was canonized at the instance of Cardinal Morton, and many wondrous events are attributed to him, although his miraculous virtues were not discovered till a century after his death.

and evidence of their increasing prosperity is found in the greater attention paid to the office of hereditary cook of the abbey, curiously evinced in the deeds of that abbot and his successors. The rectory of Church Shotowich was appropriated, by Walter the tenth abbot, to defray certain expenses of the kitchen, which had been increased by the addition of six monks; and further demands from the refectory, induced Robert (the eleventh) to appropriate the chapel of Wervin to the same department.

Thomas of Capenhurst, the twelfth abbot, who was consecrated in 1249, had to contend with a series of powerful enemies during the sixteen years he held the mitre. The first was Roger de Montalt, then justice of Chester, who endeavoured, by means of the additional influence of office, to wrest from the convent the churches of Neston, and Coddington, with several manors which his ancestors had conferred upon it. A portion of these estates were only preserved to the monks by an armed force, and the affair was finally compromised by heavy sacrifices on their part. The Chronicles of the abbey do not fail to record the judgement of heaven upon Roger de Montalt, for this conduct; his eldest son, they assert, died within fifteen days after the compromise, and he himself fell a victim to want and destitution, his burial place remaining unknown. A similar attempt to recover Astbury was made in 1259, by Roger Venables, which, according to the chronicle, was attended with an equal interposition of providence, the Baron of Kinderton dying the year afterwards. Again in 1263, another contest arose between the abbot and the former justiciary, de Zouche, who occupied the abbey with troops, and proceeded to the greatest extremities. Violent as the measures appear, to which the laity at this period resorted to obtain restitution of the property which the liberality, or the superstition of their predecessors had conferred on the church, the clergy were equally ready to appeal to arms. In a contest for the rectory of West Kirby, between the Abbots of Chester, and of Basingwerk, Thomas of Capenhurst, though himself suffering so severely from the conduct of Roger de Montalt put his nephew Ralph in possession of the benefice by absolute force of arms.

The abbacy of Simon de Albo-Monasterio or Whitchurch, was particularly distinguished by struggles between the laity and the clergy. Simon, who had previously been for twenty-two years a monk in Chester, was elected by the entire convent in 1265; but his admission to the abbey was opposed by Luke de Tanai, who taking the revenues into his own hands, expended them with the greatest profligacy. Ample compensation was at length made to Simon, and he was invested with the

temporalities of the abbey. An attempt was next made by Philip Burnell, and his wife Isabella, Baroness of Malpas, to recover the valuable manors of Boughton, Huntingdon, Saughton, and Chevely, which had been bestowed on the abbey by her ancestors. After a protracted contest, the claimants abandoned their proceedings on receiving a bond from Simon for the payment of £200 sterling. The chartulary states, that the influence of Burnell, Bishop of Bath and Wells, uncle to the claimant, was corruptly used to obtain this bond, which, however, was never paid, the abbot having procured a release, on stipulating that two of the chaplains should pray for the soul of the said Philip Burnell for ever. From the frequent recurrence of the name of this abbot, he must have been one of the most active heads the convent ever enjoyed. The monastery, or a considerable portion of it, was rebuilt by him, and precepts were directed to Reginald de Grey, chief justice of Chester in 12 Edward I., to allow venison from the forests of Wirral and Delamere, "for the sustentation of the monks then occupied on the great work of the building of the church."

In 1362, about the feast of the Annunciation, the abbot of St. Alban's, then provincial president of the Benedictines, the prior of Coventry, and the Superior of St. Alban's, visited Chester Abbey, as commissioners deputed by the Abbot of Evesham. In consequence of this visitation, Richard de Seynesbury, then abbot, who, (according to the chronicles,) was fearful of a scrutiny into "his offences and excessive delapidations," resigned the abbey into the hands of the Pope, for being an exempt, it was under the papal protection. An inquiry into his conduct was instituted at Rome, and in the following year, Pope Urban V. admitted his resignation; and Thomas de Newport, who died at the manor house in Sutton in Wirral in 1385, was appointed his successor.

The lives of the latter abbots present little worthy of notice; the twenty-first was excommunicated, although afterwards absolved; the twenty-second was charged at the Portmote Court, *temp.* 21 Edward IV., with removing the city boundaries; and at the same "*dyvers wymen*," were indicted, who were the paramours of the monks of Chester. Ripley, the twenty-third, and Birchenshaw, the twenty-fourth, were occupied during upwards of fifty years, in endeavouring to restore the buildings of the abbey to their former magnificence.

An important event in the ecclesiastical history of England was now approaching. Martin Luther, a monk of the order of Austin Friars, and a professor in the University of Wirtenburgh, had raised the standard of the Reformation in Germany by

preaching and writing against the indulgences that were so lavishly granted by the Church of Rome. His works having attracted sufficient notice to induce the King of England to reply to him, Henry sent a copy of his answer\* to the Pope, Leo X., at the perusal of which his Holiness was so much gratified, that he rewarded the royal polemic with the dignified appellation of *The Defender of the Faith*. The friendship of the head of the Church was, however, soon put to a severe test, by the fickleness of Henry's affections. Some doubts had been suggested as to the legality of the king's marriage with Catherine of Arragon, the widow of his brother; and it was alleged that the degree of consanguinity was such as to vitiate the marriage contract. These scruples, Henry declared, began to disturb his mind, and to relieve himself from so great a burden, he applied to Rome for a divorce, which Clement VII., who had succeeded to the Chair of St. Peter, would have granted, had not the fear of offending the Emperor Charles V. restrained his inclinations. The impetuosity of Henry's temper could ill brook the delay of episcopal hesitation, and the beauty of Anna Boleyn, a maid of honour to the queen, induced him to refer to his all-complying parliament, for a dissolution of the marriage with Catherine; while his Clergy, not less obedient to the royal wish than the laity, determined, in convocation, that an appeal to Rome was unnecessary. *The Defender of the Faith* was accordingly constituted at the next assembling of parliament, *The Supreme Head on earth of the Church of England*, and the connexion with Rome was thus dissolved.

In the 26th year of Henry's reign, a royal commission was issued to ascertain the value of all ecclesiastical property, and the amount of all benefices in the kingdom. The book containing the latter of these returns is called the *Liber Regis*; it is a beautiful manuscript, transcribed, it is said, for the king's library by a monk of Westminster, and from this document the value of the church livings in Wirral is extracted. The office for the receipt of tenths or firstfruits was instituted upon the visitation of the commissioners then appointed, whose report formed a kind of *Ecclesiastical Domesday Book*.

Though the returns were not completed for some time, the King's necessities induced him to suppress all the smaller monasteries in the same year (1536,) and Parliament sanctioned the deed by declaring "That to support the King's states, and to

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\* "De Septem Sacramentis, contra Martinum Lutherum heresiarchon per illustrissimum Principem Henricum VIII.," &c.

supply his wants, all religious houses might be conferred on the crown, which were not able clearly to expend £200 a year." (27 Hen. VIII.) According to Speed, 375 convents were thus dissolved; and 10,000 persons were sent, as Fuller expresses it, "to seek their fortunes,—some of them without any provision, others with but twenty shillings and a new gown, which needed," as he adds, "to be of strong cloth to last till they got another."

The necessities of the King knew no bounds, and the reports made by the Commissioners of the wealth of the Abbeys, and the profligate lives of many of the Monks and Nuns, afforded a pretence for the execution of a plan that probably had been previously formed. In 1538 the dissolution of the larger monasteries commenced, and in the following year it was completed. In 1542 an act passed the legislature, which paved the way for the suppression of Colleges and Hospitals; and even Oxford and Cambridge narrowly escaped this indiscriminate rage for rooting up ancient institutions. The number of monasteries suppressed in England and Wales amounted in the whole to 645, exclusive of 96 Colleges, 2374 Chantries and Free Chapels, and 110 Hospitals. The value of the church property thus sequestered has been variously estimated, but at the most moderate computation it is supposed to have yielded annually £200,000,\* which at only twenty years' purchase would be worth £4,000,000, or in the money of the present day at least Forty Millions. But urgent as were the King's wants, it must not be supposed that he appropriated the whole of the Revenues of the monasteries to his own use; part of them were applied to the pensioning such of the ecclesiastics belonging to those institutions as had been favourable to his plans; several free schools were also endowed from the same source, and the five new bishoprics of Oxford, Bristol, Peterborough, Gloucester and Chester were founded; for the maintenance of which, various lands were assigned.

The dissolution of so many of the smaller monasteries, the demolition of so many churches and religious houses, with the dispersing and wandering about of upwards of ten thousand monks and nuns, had raised great discontent among the people, to repress which, Henry was obliged to have recourse to arms. On the other hand, many of the principal abbots and others who had facilitated his projects, received ecclesiastical promotion. Among these was Thomas Clarke, who had been elected abbot of Chester in 1537;

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\* The clear annual value of the Revenues of the monastery of Chester was estimated at £1003 5s. 11d. according to Dugdale; and according to Speed, £1073 17s. 7½d.

having been amongst the first to comply with the wishes of the Sovereign, he was suffered to retain the government of the dissolved abbey, under the character of Dean of the Cathedral, which Henry established within its walls; but he either died or resigned in less than six months after receiving the appointment.

The new episcopal See of Chester was founded on the 16th July, but the deeds of endowment are dated 5th August, 1541. The abbey was converted into a cathedral church for one bishop, one dean, and six prebends, to be called the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral Church of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary, at Chester; having ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the entire counties of Chester and Lancaster, part of those of York, Cumberland, and Westmoreland, and a small part of Flintshire. The endowments of the newly formed diocese were in the first instance very liberal: to the bishop there was granted in Wirral, exclusive of estates in other parts, the greater portion of the townships of Willaston, Neston, Heswall, and Bidston, with the rectory of the latter, and part of the lands of the abbey of Birkenhead, besides various rents, chargeable on lands in other townships. To the dean and chapter were given the manors of Sutton, Upton, Bromborough, and Irby, with lands in Backford, Bromborough, Chorlton, Lea, Moreton, Sutton, and Upton; the rectories and churches of Bromborough, Shotwick, Upton, and West Kirby; the vicarages of Neston and Eastham; the advowsons of Bebbington, Thurstaston, and West Kirby; together with pensions from the churches of Bebbington, Eastham, Thurstaston, and West Kirby, and all the lands in those places that had been parcel of the late abbey; with rents on other estates: forming a revenue then valued at £921 13s. 10d. per annum.

But neither the bishops nor the chapter were destined long to enjoy these ample endowments. The first bishop was John Bird, formerly Provincial of the Carmelites, who having recommended himself to Henry by his sermons against the supremacy of the Pope, and his endeavours to induce Catharine to relinquish the title of Queen, was instituted bishop of Bangor, and afterwards translated to the see of Chester. \*In

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\* On the accession of Queen Mary, in 1553, Dr. Bird, notwithstanding he had doubtless been bribed for the transfer he had made of the diocesan property, was found to be indebted £1087 18s. 6d., a prodigious sum in those days, for tenths and subsidies: this was remitted to him through the interest of Bishop Bonner, with whom he complied in every respect, as he had done in all changes of government and religion, and most probably would have been suffered to retain his bishopric had he not broken his vow of celibacy, which the records mention was the cause of his deprivation, in 1554. After this he was made Rector of Great Dunmow in Essex, where he died at the age of 81 years, and was buried in the Church without any memorial.—Hemingway, i. 301.

January, 1546, Dr. Bird surrendered all the manors and real estates belonging to the bishopric to the king, receiving in lieu thereof certain impropriations and advowsons, among which were the rectories of Backford and Wallasey. By this exchange the diocese of Chester, although of greater extent than any other in the kingdom, is yet of the least value. Its entire temporalities consisted of the mere acre of ground only on which the palace stands, with the court in front of it, and two houses in Chester, together with a small orchard and a few tenements in the city of York, until 1703, when some lands in Boughton and Childer Thornton were added to it.

Sir Richard Cotton, comptroller to the household of King Edward VI, having procured the confinement of William Cliff, the dean, and two of the prebendaries of Chester, in the Fleet prison, intimidated them to convey to him almost the entire of the episcopal estates, reserving only a yearly rent of £603 18s. 10d. to the Chapter. The two succeeding deans endeavoured to have the contract set aside, on the ground of its having been extorted from their predecessor by compulsion. Their efforts were, however, unsuccessful, and for years the estates remained in the hands of the Cotton family, until it was unexpectedly discovered that the original grant by Henry VIII, was void, in consequence of the important omission of the word *Cestriae* in the description of the grantees. The dean and chapter, then petitioned the Queen, Elizabeth, that she would resume possession of these estates, and as they had been illegally obtained from them by Sir Richard Cotton, that her majesty would carry into effect the intentions of her royal father, by bestowing them on the dean and chapter. Sir Richard previously doubting the legality of his proceedings, had sold the estates in question several years before, to various gentlemen of the county, and on very low terms. The case was frequently argued in the Exchequer Court, the most eminent men of the day were retained on each side, the serjeants Topham and Gaudye, for the crown; Egerton, afterwards Lord Chancellor, and Plowden, for the fee-farmers, who continued in possession of the lands.

At length the case assuming an appearance unfavourable to the fee-farmers, they enlisted the Earl of Leicester, then at the height of his popularity, in their favour, stimulating him with a retaining fee of six years' rental of the lands. The earl, whose rapacity was as unbounded as his ambition, immediately procured a suspension of the proceedings at law, and obtained the issue of a commission, directing the case to be heard *before himself* and other Lords of the Privy Council. The result of these proceedings

was, that both parties were obliged to surrender the lands to the Queen, who in 1579-80, re-conveyed them to the fee-farmers, subject to certain rents payable out of each grant or allotment:\* these rents, some of which have been redeemed, now constitute the principal part of the endowment or revenue of this extensive and ill paid diocese, which is valued in the *Liber Regis* at £420 1s. 8d.

Some other property, such as the manor of Woodchurch, which had formerly belonged to the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh, was also obtained by Peter Grey, and Edward his brother, under a general grant, made in their favour by Queen Elizabeth, of all concealed lands in the county of Chester. Their interests in these estates were conveyed to two parties Bostock and Hitchcock, and became vested in the latter as the survivor. He afterwards sold them to the various fee-farmers, who gladly purchased his interest to render their own titles more secure.

Of the twenty-nine bishops that have been successively instituted to the diocese of Chester, since its formation to the present time, little can here be said. George Cotes, master of Baliol College, Oxford, was consecrated, as the patent states, on the "voluntary resignation" of Dr. Bird. During the few months he held the prelacy, he evinced the most inveterate zeal in favour of popery. For the cruelties with which he enforced his opinions he is justly censured by Fox, in his "*Acts and Monuments*," in which may be found a detail of the trial and condemnation of George Marsh, who for his attachment to the principles of protestantism was burnt at Boughton.† Dr. Scott, the third bishop, consecrated in 1556, was one of the four prelates that with as many divines, undertook to defend the Church of Rome against eight ministers of the Reformed Church; having uttered some irreverent expressions against the queen, he was, with the greater part of his colleagues, committed to the tower: his imprisonment had little effect on his opinions or his manners, he spoke warmly against the Act of Uniformity, and afterwards entered a protest against that measure, for which he was dismissed from his bishopric and committed to prison. Sir Peter Leycester describes

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\* For a more detailed account of these proceedings see the Harleian MSS. No. 2060, pp. 90-113, and 2171, 166-67.

† Cowp. MSS.—"Marsh behaved with such unflinching fortitude during his suffering, that the beholders were astonished." In giving this account, Dr. Cowper adds, "that after the exhibition of a conditional pardon by the Vice-Chancellor, Mr. Vawdrey, and the refusal of it by Marsh on the terms of recantation, the people pressed forward to attempt a rescue, headed by Sheriff Cowper, who was much affected by the sufferings of the martyr." "Mr. Cowper was, however, beat off by the other sheriff, and effecting his escape into Wales, was outlawed, and his estates seized by government." —Parry, 127.



him as "a froward person, who being put in the prison of the Fleet in London, made his escape and fled to Louvain, where he died." *Part iii*, p. 166

The fifth bishop, William Chatterton, D.D., President of Queen's College, Cambridge, and Regius Professor of Divinity in that University, was consecrated in 1579, Bishop of Chester, where he continued until his translation to Lincoln, in 1595. Being one of the commissioners of ecclesiastical causes, numerous letters were addressed to him relative to the Cheshire and Lancashire recusants, of whom there were in his diocese 2442, while all England contained only 8512. In one of these letters, many of which are to be found in Peck's *Desiderata Curiosa*, the earl of Huntingdon, after alluding to the bishop's intended residence at Manchester, where "the recusants were mostly kept in the New Fleete, the castle of Chester being too near the sea," remarks, "I am glad your lordship liketh to live in Manchester, for as it is the best place in those parts, soe you do well to continue and strengthen them, that they maie increase and go forward in the service of the Lord. And surelie by the grace of God, the well plaintinge of the gospell in Manchester, and the places near to yt, shall in time effect much good in other places." \*

The varied incidents that mark the chequered life of Thomas Moreton, the ninth bishop of Chester, deserve more space than can here be allowed to them. His consecration in 1616, was attended by three archbishops, twelve bishops, above thirty noblemen, and upwards of eighty knights and persons of distinction; and upon his arrival at Chester he was received by all the principal gentry of the county, by whom he was escorted to the episcopal palace. He was zealous in endeavouring to reconcile the conscientious nonconformists and the popish recusants to the established church; and his efforts were so far successful, that they were noticed in the royal declaration of

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\* Dr. Chatterton is generally described as having been a most learned and witty man. Many of his sermons are yet extant; they abound with references to passing events. He was much esteemed by the noble family of Derby, and preached a funeral sermon upon the death of Henry, the fourth earl, at Ormskirk; in which, after a warm eulogium on the deceased peer, he turned to his son and successor, Ferdinand, and exclaimed, "You noble Earl, that not only inherit, but exceed your father's virtues, learn to keep the love of your country as your father did. You give in your arms three legs, signifying three counties, Cheshire, Derbyshire, and Lancashire; stand fast on these legs, and you shall need fear none of their arms."

The Bishop was by no means happy in his domestic affairs, and his only child, a daughter, after her marriage with Sir Richard Brooke, Bart., of Norton, was equally unfortunate, and finally they separated. To this he doubtless alludes when in one of his latter sermons he says, "The choice of a wife is full of hazard, not unlike a man groping for one fish in a barrel full of serpents; if he escape harm of the snakes and light on the fish, he may be thought lucky; yet let him not boast, for perhaps it may be but an eel."

1618, in which year he was translated to the see of Lichfield and Coventry. He was afterwards instituted bishop of Durham, from which he was ejected, and after enduring confiscation, imprisonment, and other severe hardships, with exemplary patience, he sought refuge at the seat of Sir Henry Yelverton, at Easton Manduit, in Northamptonshire, where he died; an epitaph placed on his tomb in that parish church describes his "many and rare virtues."

The appointment of John Wilkins, D.D. as fourteenth bishop, affords a striking instance of moderation and forbearance on the part of Charles II. Wilkins, who had married the sister of Oliver Cromwell, at the breaking out of the civil war, sided with the parliament, and having taken the solemn league and covenant, in 1648, was made warden of Wadham College. Eleven years afterwards he was appointed, by Richard Cromwell, master of Trinity College, from which at the restoration he was displaced; but ecclesiastical honours and emoluments were successively conferred upon him until 1668, when he was instituted bishop of Chester, on which occasion Dr. Tillotson, who had married his daughter-in-law, preached the consecration sermon.

"The Diary of Dr. Thomas Cartwright, bishop of Chester," recently published by the Camden Society, has furnished many interesting particulars of the secret history of that prelate, who was consecrated in October, 1686, on the death of Dr. Pearson, the fifteenth bishop, author of the "*Exposition of the Creed*."

Throughout his "Diary," this protestant bishop is found in constant communication with many of the leading Roman Catholics of the time; not only with those whom he found in his own diocese, but those who were more especially the agents of the Pope, in the design of re-uniting the church of England to that of which Rome was the head. He was so warm a supporter of the measures of James II, "being ready upon all occasions to run with his humour, purposely to obtain a translation to a better bishopric," that upon the landing of the Prince of Orange he was obliged to seek refuge in France. During his residence there, he was made bishop of Salisbury by James; accompanying

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\* Anthony Wood, who will never be suspected of partiality to the political opinions of Wilkins, says "He was a person endowed with rare gifts; he was a noted theologist and preacher, a curious critic in several matters, an excellent mathematician and experimentalist, and one as well seen in mechanism and new philosophy, of which he was a great promoter, as any man of his time. He also highly advanced the study and perfecting of astronomy, both at Oxford, while he was warden of Wadham, and at London, while he was fellow of the Royal Society; and I cannot say that there was anything deficient in him, but a constant mind, and settled principles." He died at Dr. Tillotson's, in 1672.

that monarch to Ireland, he was attacked by a disease then prevalent, and finished his earthly career in March, 1689.\*

It is from the interference of the learned Dr. Francis Gastrell, the nineteenth bishop, who died in 1725, that the collections of the Randle Holmes have been preserved to the public; they were offered to the corporation of the city, who declining to purchase, the prelate recommended them to the earl of Oxford, by whom they were bought; from these and the episcopal registers Dr. Gastrell compiled his excellent manuscript compendium of documents, relating to the benefices of the diocese, entitled "*Notitia Cestriensis*."

During the prelacy of Edmund Keene, the twenty-first bishop, the clergy of Cheshire were relieved from the excessive mortuaries to which they alone had continued subject from the time of Henry VIII. until 1755. The archdeacon of Chester, upon the death of every rector and vicar within his jurisdiction, was entitled to the best horse or mare that had belonged to the deceased, together with the best bridle, saddle, boots, and spurs; also his best hat, book, upper garment, coat, cloak, or gown, cassock and doublet, girdle, shoes, stockings, tippets, garters, shirt, gloves, band, and cuffs; seal and ring, with finally his purse, and *all the money in it*, at the time of his decease.†

William Markham, elected twenty-second bishop in 1771, preceptor to the late king George IV, and the duke of York, held the see only five years before he was translated to the Archbishopric of York; he died at a very advanced age, in 1807. He was succeeded by Dr. Beilby Porteus, who was born at York, of American parents, in 1731, and was the youngest but one of nineteen children. He was translated to London, and there died in 1808, but was interred near Tunbridge in Kent, where he had built a chapel, which he endowed with £250 per annum.‡

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\* Burnet thus speaks of him, "The other two Bishoprics were less considerable, so they resolved to fill them with the two worst men that could be found out. Cartwright was promoted to Chester. He was a man of good capacity, and had made some progress in learning. He was ambitious and servile; cruel and boisterous; and by the great liberties he allowed himself, he fell under much scandal of the worst sort. He set himself to raise the king's authority above law; which he said was only a method of government to which kings might submit as they pleased: but their authority was from God, absolute and superior to law, and which they might exert as oft as they found it necessary for the ends of government."

† By the 21 Henry VIII, mortuaries as regarded all persons within the realm, were for the first time regulated according to the value of the personal property of the deceased; the ancient rights of the Archdeacons of Chester were especially excepted, but these were abolished in 1755, and the Rectory of Waverton annexed to the see of Chester in lieu thereof.

‡ The charities of Dr. Porteus were unbounded. Among others, in his life time he transferred near seven thousand pounds stock to the Archdeacons of London, as a permanent fund for the poorer clergy in that Diocese.

Dr. Cleaver was advanced to the see of Chester in 1787, through the interest of the Marquis of Buckingham, whom he had attended as chaplain when his lordship was lord lieutenant of Ireland. He was succeeded by Dr. Majendie, who was translated to the see of Bangor in 1810, when Dr. Sparke, dean of Bristol, was consecrated bishop of Chester. George Henry Law, D.D. Prebendary of Carlisle, was consecrated twenty-seventh bishop of Chester, on the 5th July 1812, on the translation of Dr. Sparke to the see of Ely: twelve years afterwards, Dr. Law was removed to Bath and Wells, the bishopric of which he still retains. To him succeeded Charles James Bloomfield, D.D. Rector of the parish of St. Botolph, London, who held the diocese only four years, when he was translated to the metropolitan see, over which his lordship yet presides.

John Bird Sumner, D.D. Prebendary of Durham, was instituted bishop of Chester in the year 1828, and is at this time (1844,) zealously occupied in fulfilling the duties of his exalted station.

The vastly increasing population of the manufacturing parts of Cheshire and Lancashire, all of which are included in the diocese of Chester, has long shown the necessity of a division of this widely extended see, the boundary of which is not less than five hundred and seventy miles. The incessant labours of Dr. Sumner rendered this, if possible, still more apparent, and at length the legislature enacted, that upon the determination of certain existing interests, Lancashire north of Morecambe Bay should be annexed to the see of Carlisle, and the southern part of that county form the diocese of Manchester; a corresponding portion of ecclesiastical duties and jurisdiction being accordingly transferred from Chester. The foundation of the see of Manchester is delayed, until the consolidation of the dioceses of Bangor and St. Asaph, which according to the *present* law is to take place upon the death of either of the prelates that preside over them. Most vehement opposition to the union of these two bishoprics is evinced in Wales, and Earl Powys, last session, introduced a bill to repeal the act by which their amalgamation is enacted; but her Majesty's ministers having withheld the Queen's consent, the bill, which had been read a second time, was withdrawn, in accordance with the forms of the House.

The extensive Diocese of Chester is at present divided into two Archdeaconries, those of Chester and Richmond. In that of Chester are twelve deaneries, viz: Chester, Wirral, Bangor, Malpas, Nantwich, Middlewich, Macclesfield, Frodsham, Manchester, Warrington, Blackburn, and Leyland. The Archdeaconry of Richmond contains eight

deaneries, viz: Amounderness, Lonsdale, Kendal, Furness, Richmond, Catterick, Cope-land, and Boroughbridge. The Deanery of Wirral comprehends the entire hundred, containing fifteen parishes, and several extra-parochial places or chapelries.

According to the late census, the population of the Diocese amounts to considerably more than one-eighth of the inhabitants of England and Wales; there being in Cheshire 395,660, in Lancashire 1,667,054, in Yorkshire 106,117, in Cumberland 71,464, in Westmoreland 37,144, and in North Wales 14,461: total, 2,291,900.

The following, (accidentally omitted on p. 122,) will supply the list of donations subsequently made by the Earl and his followers, to the Abbot and Convent of Chester, of lands and other properties in Wirral; and it is useful in shewing how much of the other parts of the hundred passed into their hands.


After the earlier of the endowments, "the Earl (Lupus,) conferred on the Convent the great tithe of Calders, (*Caldy*,) which grant was confirmed by Robertus Filius Serlonis, when he obtained that lordship; and he also gave the tithes of Greasby and Storeton, which Nigel de Burceio confirmed, when the townships fell into his possession. \* \* Walkeline, the nephew of Walter de Vernon, gave certain lands in Nesse, with all the tithes of Prenton, Ledsham, and the third part of his own, and his wife's goods. Ranulph, the son of Ermiwin, gave some lands in Woodchurch, with the tithes of Barnston, and also of all his mares. Seward gave the chapel of Bebington, with four oxgangs of land, and the tithes of all his lordships. Richard de Mesilwerin, (*Mainwaring*,) gave all the tithes of Blachenol, (*Blaconhall, Blacon-cum-crabwall*,) including fish, as well as corn and everything titheable. After the death of Earl Lupus, his son Richard, not only confirmed all his father's grants to the Abbey, but he made considerable additions to them, as did his barons; one of whom, Matthew de Rodelent, supposed to have been an illegitimate son of the great Baron of Rodelent or Rhuddlan, on his brother Simon professing at the shrine of St. Werburgh, presented the abbot and convent with the church of Turemstone, (*Thurstaston*.) Randall, the second earl of that name, in recompense for some damage done to the monastery, or for some personal injury done to the monks, gave them the lordships of Eastham and Bruneberg, (*Bromborough*,) in perpetual alms."

## THE HUNDRED OF WIRRAL.



Where Mersey for more state,  
Assuming broader banks, himself so proudly bears  
That at his stern approach, extended Wirral fears,  
That what betwixt his floods of Mersey and of Dee,  
In very little time deboured he might be.

DRAYTON'S POLYOLBION, Canto xi.

T is unquestionable that great changes have taken place in the aspect of this part of the kingdom since the Romans had dominion in Britain. In their time the Ribble seems to have been the chief river of this district, and Ribchester, (*Rivecastrum*,) the *Rerigonium* of Antoninus, is said to have been a city as great as any out of Rome. "The port was Poulton, below Preston, at the neb of the naze, so vastly inferior at the present time, to various situations on the Mersey and the Dee, that it is impossible not to admit, that some extraordinary change has taken place in their physical condition since that period. Tradition says, that the port of Ribble was destroyed by an earthquake, and also that there were tremendous inundations in Cheshire and Lancashire about the termination of the Roman sway in England; and various phenomena we have seen, seem to point to some such catastrophe.\*" In ignorance of everything connected with these events, various have been the speculations made upon the former state of the HUNDRED OF WIRRAL, which from several reasons, is considered to have once been an island, separated from the greater part of the county by water, covering the present valley of Broxton.

The Hundred of Wirral now forms a narrow peninsula. The majestic waters of the Mersey and the Dee wash its shores on the east and the west; the north is bounded by the Irish sea, and a low valley which runs in an angular direction, from the Dee

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\* Report of the Commissioners of Enquiry into Municipal Corporations. Nov. 1833. Appendix, cxvii.

through the townships of the Mollingtons, Backford, Chorlton, and Stoke, to the Mersey, forms its limit on the southern side. That this valley, which separates the hundred of Broxton from that of Wirral, was once occupied with water, can hardly be doubted by any who look down from the forest hills upon the surface of the country, or from the great natural terrace extending from Churton to Aldford. A rise of a very few yards only above the level of the ordinary spring tides, would overflow the land to a great extent, and render Wirral that which the traditions of the country state it to have been at a very remote period. The variations in the elevation of the land between the two rivers is so trifling, that it was proposed to take the Dee into the Mersey, instead of forming its present embankments; and it was this suggestion that originally induced the late Mr. Pennant to make a series of observations, which led to the construction of the present canal between Whitby locks and Chester. Most of the old maps of the county exhibit a small river as running through the vale of Broxton, across the entire peninsula, which would corroborate the junction of the Mersey and the Dee; but this was, in fact, only a small brook, rising near the middle of the valley, one branch of which joined the stagnant waters of the Gowy, near Thornton, and the other flowed into the Dee, connecting the two rivers by a line of natural waters, but not bringing them into confluence.

The former entrance to the river Mersey has been a subject of much curious speculation, and amid the various theories that have from time to time been suggested, few seem more probable than that the present *embouchure* is of comparative recent formation, and that at an early period the waters of the Mersey flowed into the estuary of the Dee through the vale of Broxton.

Ancient history supports the belief that mighty changes have taken place in the boundaries of the sea on the western shores of Britain; changes sufficient to justify the hypothesis of the non-existence of the estuary of the Mersey, at the date of the Roman dominion in these realms.

If implicit reliance could be placed upon the works of the more ancient geographers, the original confluence of the two rivers might be considered as a settled point, for none of the Roman maps or writings notice any river that corresponds with the present course of the Mersey. In the *Antonian Itinerary*,\* or Roman account of the

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\* "The '*Antoni Augusti Itinerarium*;' contains an enumeration of the principal cities or military stations of the empire, arranged in different itinera, or journeys, with the distance of the station at which the Iter begins, from that at which it ends,

western shores of Britain, though the Dee, (*Seteia Portus*) the Lune, (*Setantiorum Portus*) the Ken, (*Moricambe*) and the Ribble, (*Belisama Estuarium*) \* are mentioned, there is no allusion to any body of waters which could be confounded with the Mersey; nor is any river mentioned between the Great Ormshead (*Ganganorum promontorium*) and the Ribble, except the Dee, and a small stream (*Setobis*) which occurs in one of the later manuscripts of Ptolemy, and from its distance from the western entrance of the Dee, is evidently intended for the Conway.

But although ancient historians do not furnish a sufficient description of the then existing state of the Mersey, an attentive examination of the surface of the county, and its geological remains, will lead to the conclusion that much of the vast expanse of sands, which now almost block up the entrance to that river, was at some remote period, a continuation of the forests of Lancashire, which, extending from Formby over the Burbo and Hoyle Banks, reached, or, as it were, overlapped the shores of Wirral. That a very extensive forest did exist in Lancashire is proved, beyond all doubt, by an ancient perambulation of the *Forest of Derby*, in 1225, given at length in the *Kuerden MSS.*,† in which the boundary is distinctly laid down as extending to the shores of the Mersey. It is equally certain that Wirral was afforested by Randal

in Roman miles, and with the names and relative distances of all the intervening stations. It may be considered a sort of Road Book of the whole Roman empire. The part relating to Britain comprises fifteen itinera or military routes, of different extent; some proceeding from the wall of Hadrian, some from Londinium, some from Eburacum, and some from other stations; thus marking the course of the principal military roads throughout the province. Though it is sometimes difficult to ascertain the site of the itinerary stations, owing chiefly, perhaps, to the errors which have crept into the numbering of the miles, yet it is a work to which we owe more discoveries of the Roman places and Roman roads in Britain, than to all other authors put together. Neither the author nor the age of this valuable work are certainly known; but the most probable conjecture is, that Antonius to whom it is ascribed, was Antonius Caracalla, the son of Septimus Severus; and that it bears his name, not as being the author, but the emperor by whose authority it was compiled. If this conjecture be well grounded, the work is as old as the beginning of the third century. There is, however, good reason for suspecting that it was not all composed by the same person: additions have, no doubt, been made in subsequent periods; and these have induced some learned antiquaries to ascribe to the whole a later date."—Rev. C. Wellbeloved's *Eburacum, or York under the Romans*.

\* Much difference of opinion, at one period, existed as to whether the *Belisama Estuarium* of Ptolemy was the Ribble, or the Mersey; Dr. Whitaker contends that the Mersey was not mentioned by Ptolemy, because there was no port of sufficient size or celebrity on its shores to attract the notice of the Roman mariners, from whose observations he obtained the materials for his history, and the learned Doctor has abundantly shewn that the Mersey, and not the Ribble, was overlooked,—an opinion very different to that of his immediate predecessor, Mr. John Whitaker.

† Entitled, *Brigantia Lancasteriensis Restaurata*. They consist of five folio volumes, completed by Dr. Richard Kuerden, M. D., of the ancient house of Cuerdale, of Cuerdale, in 1664. It was intended to publish this work, but the MSS. remain in the Collegiate Library, at Manchester, and the writing is so obscure and illegible, that it is with difficulty it can be decyphered.



de Meschines, when Earl of Chester, and that the bailiwick of the forest was afterwards held by the Stanleys of Storeton and Hooton. The horn of the Forester of Wirral, his warrant in 1283 for the allowance of venison to the workmen engaged in rebuilding Chester Cathedral, and his petition for remuneration when Wirral was disforested in 1362, are yet in existence; and though the Hundred now appears so denuded of wood, considerable fossil remains of a forest may be traced the entire length of the river Birken, from its source at Newton Car, to Wallasey Pool. Near Leasowe Castle they are found for upwards of a mile from East to West, on both sides of the Birken, and many oak trees of a large size have been dug out from the sands.\* Similar remains are also visible at low water, of the highest spring tides, upon the Lancashire side of the Mersey. They are generally laying prostrate at the roots to which they were once united. From the regularity of their position, it is evident they had been planted; and, not being found in the incumbent masses decayed forests usually exhibit, it would seem they were either cut down or destroyed by some sudden and violent catastrophe.†

These facts establish the existence of a forest upon the confines of the two counties, on a site, much of which is now covered by the estuary of the Mersey, which consequently could not then have occupied its present channel. Its entrance, most probably, was then a mere streamlet, meandering to the Dee, along the shore now called Mockbeggar Wharf, and so insignificant as to account for its omission from the ancient maps. The present magnificent estuary is doubtless owing to some violent disruption of nature, in which the land yielded to the force of the waters.

It is only about eighty years since the present lighthouse was erected near Leasowe Castle, to supply the place of one that had previously existed nearer to the sea by half a mile, occupying a site which at the time of its erection appeared to be firm dry land,

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\* In these submarine forests have also been found fossil remains of the Hippopotamus of the South Seas, the Canadian, and the Irish Elk, with horns of Stags of all ages and sizes; and, also, those of the Bos-Taurus,—a native of the old British forests, now nearly extinct, although a species much degenerated in size yet remains in the parks of Chatellerault, and of Chillingham, and at Lyme in Cheshire. Some horns of the Cervus Elephas have been discovered in excavating the bed of Wallasey Pool, not in a fossil state, but retaining their animal matter;—the same convulsion which embedded the forest having, in all probability, entombed its antlered inhabitants.

In the prosecution of some surveys connected with the entrance into Liverpool, in 1828, a cemetery was found opposite the present lighthouse at Leasowe, about 150 yards below the flow of the tide; a similar burial place has also been discovered at Formby, on the Lancashire shore.

† The encroachments of the Mersey at remote periods are frequently referred to, though their immediate effects may not have been so visible. In 1294 the Cistercians of Stanlaw, “in consequence of the irruptions of the river, which then rose three feet high in the offices of their monastery, threatening all with destruction,” were obliged to remove to Whalley.

yet the waters not only flowed over it, but threatened to involve the present fabric in a similar ruin, until measures were taken for its preservation and that of the neighbouring country, by raising the "Leasowe Embankments" under the provisions of an act obtained in 1828.

Supposing then, that there was not at that remote time any entrance to the Mersey below Liverpool, the enquiry naturally arises, in what manner did the vast body of water that flows below Warrington, (which town is named in the *Antonian Itinerary*,) communicate with the sea? to which it may be answered, either through the vale of Broxton, or by the low lands and marshes that extend from the Dee, at Thurstaston, to the Mersey at Wallasey Pool. Of the latter Dr. Ormerod observes "at the extremity of the hundred, on the shore of the Irish sea, is a long level plain, protected only from the ravages of the sea by a line of sand hills, and opening to the Dee by a deep rocky vale near Thurstaston, and to the Mersey by another valley, which extends by Birkenhead and Wallasey, to the bay called Wallasey Pool;" at the occurrence of a tide that "would fill these valleys and cover the low range protected by the sand hills on the edge of the Irish Sea, the Dee and the Mersey would present only *one large mouth common to both rivers*, from which would rise two rocky islands, the parishes of West Kirkby, and Kirkby-in-Walley or Wallasey, in the ancient name of which, *Walleia*, we yet find an allusion to its insular position." (Vol. ii. p. 188.)

The two rivers thus mingling through the channels of Thurstaston and Wallasey, and presenting conjointly one mouth, broken only by two inconsiderable islands, would together form the *Seteia Portus* and leave no impeachment on this point of the accuracy of the informants of Ptolemy.

It would not require much increase of tide to fill the low lands between the hundreds of Wirral and Broxton, and even now, traces of former operations of the sea, to which Wirral may owe its original foundation, are yet distinguishable in the vale of Broxton. Though the surface soil consists of clay or marl, the substratum is rock, which, whether at a great depth, or rising to the level with, or, as in some instances above the land, is invariably covered with shells, gravel, and small fragments of rock, worn round by the action of water. Sand is often found in large patches, and not in regular veins, and it is frequently mixed with broken shells, sea gravel, and other marine productions. The soil about Chorlton, Coughall, and other parts of the valley of Broxton, has been examined, and at a depth of about a yard below the surface it is invariably

found to be composed of coarse grey sea sand, similar to the ground which has been recovered by the embankments from the Dee, mingled with fragments of marine shells. A very considerable quantity of shells is also deposited in the gravel which occasionally is met with on the sides of the valley; and roads and garden walks, that have been covered with this gravel appear plentifully bestrewn with minute fragments of shells, after the surface has been washed by showers of rain.

Near the point at which the Mersey meets this valley on the south, is Ince, a place which could only obtain its *British* name, *Ynys*, or the island, from its elevation above the surrounding waters; and on the other side is *Pull* or *Pool*, a name evidently derived from the lake or pool. So lately as the 31st Edward III. the Abbot of Chester, in answer to a *quo warranto*, claimed among other manorial rights and privileges *Wrecum Maris* in his manors of Cleveley and Huntingdon; clearly implying that some value was attached, or had been attached, to wrecks occurring in those places, which are now several miles from the sea.

Having thus seen that the valley of Broxton is situated so low, as to be liable to inundation from a tide of only a few feet greater elevation than usual; that it abounds with shells and other marine productions; that its soil corresponds with that of the bed of the Dee; that the towns at its eastern entrance bear names descriptive of its position as a body of water; that its former possessors considered the wrecks that might occur on its shores, now miles from the sea, as of value, and above all that the present entrance of the Mersey was at a remote though unknown period, a thickly wooded forest, while on both sides of the river the strata are precisely similar, and the fossil remains found there are the same,—may it not be presumed that the estuary of the Mersey did not exist at the time of the Romans, but that a bog or morass then occupied much of the space from Weston Point towards Eastham, and that it was bounded on the north by Lancashire and Cheshire, through the latter of which the waters forced a passage, by Broxton, to the Dee?

Remarkable as such a change may appear, others as singular are constantly taking place on the face of nature,\* and nothing is impossible to HIM by whom all things were made.

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\* In the year 1795, a village on the coast of Kincardineshire was suddenly invaded by the sea, which penetrating one hundred and fifty yards inland, has to the present day maintained its usurpation. The whole site of the ancient town of Cromer, now forms part of the German Ocean; and Dunwich, which was once a populous and flourishing town, and

The traditions which for ages have existed, that the two counties were at one period connected, until rent asunder by some violent convulsion,—and the general belief that that occurred in the tremendous earthquake and inundation which visited the western part of Britain, in the fifth century,—derive confirmation from the numerous fossil remains with which these parts abound, many of them animals unknown in these days, and to which reference will be more particularly made hereafter. In the *Appendix* will be found an interesting paper on the estuary and navigation of the river Mersey, communicated by Joseph Brooks Yates, Esq. of Liverpool, a gentleman deservedly high in the literary world, and who has paid much attention to the subject.

The navigation of the DEE, the other great boundary of Wirral, has always been a subject of the greatest anxiety to the inhabitants of Chester, as by it, in olden times, “great stores of shippes” used to arrive; and it formed the harbour or general haven of refuge for the northern fleets of many of the earlier British monarchs. This river, (in Welsh, *Ddwfrdwy*, “the water of Dee,”) rises in Merionethshire, and after skirting the counties of Denbigh and Flint, passes by Farndon, and enters Cheshire at Aldford, about five miles from Chester: near Chester bridge, where it meets the tidal waters, it

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the most considerable sea-port on the coast of Suffolk, has been gradually encroached upon and swept away, so that there does not at present remain twenty houses. The church of Reculvers in Kent was three centuries ago nearly a mile inland; it is now not more than fifty yards from the water's edge. The island of Nordstrand, once equal in extent to Cheshire, is an awful proof of the destructive ravages of the ocean. It is known to have been separated from the mainland of Jutland, by a narrow stream only, and to have been fifty miles long and thirty-five broad: to have been populous, and highly cultivated. In October, 1643, a great storm devastated the whole island, (which had been previously reduced to an area of twenty miles in circumference) destroying 1340 people and 50,000 head of cattle: two small islets, becoming less and less every year, are all that remain of the once populous and fertile Nordstrand. The Scilly islands formerly enumerated at ten only, are now broken into upwards of one hundred and forty; it is probable that at one time they were attached to the main land of Cornwall, on the shore of which, at low water of spring tides the remains of houses, a church, and a cemetery, may yet be seen. It is almost capable of demonstration that the Isle of Wight was once connected with the opposite shore of Hampshire; and that England and France have been joined at some period, although very remote, there can be little doubt; the cliffs of Dover are identical with those of Calais, and between Folkstone and Boulogne, there is a submarine chain of hills, in some places only fourteen feet below the surface at low water. From the German Ocean to the Straits, the water becomes gradually more shallow, decreasing, in a distance of 200 leagues, from 120 to 18 fathoms; and in the same manner, from the straits to the mouth of the English Channel, there is a gradual increase of the depth of the water, so that at the straits there is a ridge with a fall to the east and west. There was a tradition in the time of Virgil, that Sicily was part of Italy; which is alluded to in a passage in the *Æneid* iii. 414, which Dryden has thus translated:—

“Th’ Italian shore,  
And fair Sicilian coast were one, before  
An earthquake caused the flaw; the roaring tides  
The passage broke, that land from land divides;  
And where the lands retired, the rushing ocean rides.”

is diverted into an artificial channel, cut through the marshes of Flintshire to Hawarden Castle, a distance of nine miles. At Flint it forms an estuary three miles wide, much impeded by sandbanks, but increasing in width until it falls into the Irish sea near the point of Ayr, on the south or Welsh side, and the Isle of Hilbre on the north or Wirral side. The navigation became so injured early in the fifteenth century, by frequent changes of the Channels, that in 1449, a commission was issued to enquire into its condition, and to suggest such measures as might prevent its total destruction. The result of the inquiry was the commencement of a new quay, about eight miles from Chester, but pecuniary difficulties prevented its completion for a century, and in 1550 a memorial was transmitted from the citizens to the Marquis of Winchester, then Lord Treasurer to Edward VI. soliciting his intercession with the king for a contribution towards the expense of building the new quay or "harbour then erecting in Wirral, all of stone, and in the face or belly of the sea, which would cost at the least from £5000 to £6000." This produced a royal order, that a collection should be made in all the churches in the kingdom in aid of the undertaking; and an especial assessment was levied in the city of Chester for the same purpose. By these means the haven was at length completed, and for many years vessels trading with Chester received and discharged their cargoes at the "New Key." It was, however, very inefficient, as those of greater burthen than twenty tons were obliged to remain at Dawpool. Various suggestions were made for its further improvement, and in 1677, Mr. Andrew Yarranton, having taken a survey of the Dee, published the result of his inquiries in his book on "*England's Improvements by sea and land.*" He proposed to the Duke of York, the then great patron of all public works, to recover a large tract of land from the sea, by making an entire new channel which should carry the navigation to the walls of Chester. The advantage of Yarranton's inventive genius was reserved for others; his proposal did not meet with any encouragement, and his scheme was abandoned.

Equally unsuccessful was a like design that was made in 1763, by Evan Jones, who undertook to carry into effect a plan whereby vessels of the burthen of upwards of one hundred tons might be brought to the city walls. This he engaged to complete at his own cost, provided the lands that would be reclaimed should be vested in him, on paying the usual rent to the crown, and one-fourth of the profits to certain companies or guilds of the citizens. These profits, he proposed, should accumulate for the purpose of building, equipping, and freighting, one or more ships for each company, which

should be engaged in trade for the advantage of the respective guilds, and the annual profit distributed among the several aldermen and members. On the other hand, he was to be personally entitled to certain duties on coals, lime, and stone; his claiming which, appears to have been the principal cause of the rejection of his scheme by the corporation. A few years afterwards, Mr. Gell of London submitted a similar proposal to that of Mr. Jones, differing only as to the rate of reserved duties on coal, and the allotment to the city companies; this was, in the first instance, also rejected. He nevertheless, did not abandon the proposition, but made a second application, offering to deposit £2000 in the hands of trustees for the completion of the work. This obtained the sanction of the Corporation, who applied to parliament for leave "to enable the mayor and citizens of Chester to recover and preserve the navigation of the River Dee," and an act was passed, 11 and 12 William and Mary, for that purpose. Another act was obtained in 1732, by which the undertaking was transferred to Nathaniel Kinderley and others, who were empowered to enclose a large tract on the banks of the Dee, called the *White Sands*, on condition of making the river navigable from the sea to Chester.

In 1735, the new cut was commenced; and the whole was finished in 1737, when the water of the old channel entered the new one. Every exertion was used for reclaiming the lands; and so early as 1754, no less than 1411 acres of land had been recovered from the sea; 664 acres more were reclaimed by 1763; and six years afterwards, an additional quantity of 348 acres. By the year 1790, another enclosure of 1090 acres had been effected; and again, in 1826, 471 acres more; making in the whole, nearly four thousand acres, (exclusive of a large quantity of unenclosed salt grass land,) which is all now under tillage, and very valuable.

Notwithstanding the extent and value of the lands thus recovered, the expenses of the undertaking were so enormous, that numbers sold out at ninety per cent. loss; and although at the present time the annual proceeds are considerable, yet if the loss of interest be taken into account, the representatives of the original shareholders receive but a small return for the capital embarked. The provisions of the acts, so far as regards preserving the navigation of the river, are sufficiently stringent, but the result has hitherto been a miserable failure. "The principal defect," says Sir John Rennie in a letter dated 1837, "exists between Chester and the town of Flint; for while vessels drawing 15 feet can almost always reach the latter place at high

water of neap tides; vessels drawing only 12 and 13 feet can scarcely reach Chester even at spring tides, and then only with considerable care and attention: to enable them to come up to Chester at neap tides, it would be requisite there should be an additional depth of from 9 to 10 feet." Various plans have been devised to remedy this defect; among which, was one to carry the waters of the Dee from the sluice-house at Chester, nearly in a line with the present canal, to Whitby, where it would form a junction with the Mersey. The expense was estimated at £70,000, but the scheme was abandoned; and it is probable, that the Chester and Birkenhead Railway, and other conflicting interests, will now prevent its ever being carried into effect.

Another plan was devised, to erect flood-gates at the entrance of the artificial channel near Connah's Quay, and thus convert it into a magnificent floating harbour or canal. This, however, without making another channel for the tidal and fresh waters, would be unadvisable, as it would be almost impracticable to provide otherwise for the drainage of the interior country, and the expense presents too formidable an obstacle for its accomplishment.

In 1820, a steam-boat establishment was projected at Dawpool, below Caldy; public meetings were held, the usual subscriptions entered into, surveys made by inexperienced persons, and much expense uselessly incurred before the project was finally relinquished. Although such an extensive undertaking was deemed unnecessary, the country for the most part being occupied by several excellent canals, such as the Duke of Bridgewater's, the Grand Trunk, the Mersey and Irwell, and others; Mr. Chapman completely proved the practicability of the scheme, and established the importance of making the Dee an additional outlet for the trade and manufactures of this part of the country.

In 1825, the late Mr. Chapman, C. E., wrote a very able report on the subject of a ship channel from below Parkgate, through Wirral, towards Chester, and to be continued to Manchester, whereby that important town was to be made a seaport. And shortly afterwards, the late Messrs. Telford, Stephenson, and Nimmo, made a survey and reported on the practicability of a new entrance into the Mersey, from Dawpool, across the hundred to Wallasey Pool; their report was so favourable that the corporation of Liverpool bought the lands on the shore of the pool, and the project was abandoned.

In 1837, Sir John Rennie was employed by a "number of gentlemen interested in

promoting an increase of the shipping interest of the Port of Chester to make a survey of the capabilities of the port and harbour, with a view to the improvement of the river and the formation of wet docks."

In the very lengthened report that Sir John made to the parties, he recommended the cutting of a "ship canal commencing near Heswall, with communicating bridges, and terminating at Chester with floating docks, near the basin of the Ellesmere canal;" it was to have not less than 18 or 20 feet water, so as to admit vessels of 600 or 700 tons, and to be sufficiently wide for steamers to use their machinery without injury to the banks, the total expense of which he estimated at £560,000. His apprehensions that, "the establishments situated along the banks of the present river would have to be abandoned, which probably would not be permitted," were confirmed, and his plan was relinquished, notwithstanding his urgent advice that "if the present opportunity be delayed much longer, new projects for other places will arise, and the great additional capital which will be expended on them, and in communicating with the Mersey, will create fresh and powerful interests, which it will be very difficult to overcome; and the obstacles against improving and rendering the Port of Chester what it is capable of being made will be greatly increased." *Sir J. Rennie's Report, 1837, page 19.*

The only river, if the term can be applied to a stream so very insignificant, that exclusively belongs to Wirral, is the Birken, which rises in Newton Car, in the township of Grange; the Birken may, with some difficulty, be traced through several of the townships of West Kirkby and Woodchurch, until crossing Saughall Massie, it joins the Mersey at Wallasey Pool. On the south side of this piece of water, which should more properly be called Birkenhead Pool, the extensive harbour, docks, and warehouses, now in course of erection, will go far to confirm the apprehensions of Sir John Rennie, and present insurmountable obstacles to the future amendment of the Dee.

The Agriculture of Cheshire is generally admitted not to bear so high a character as that of some of the other counties of England; and certainly the hundred of Wirral does not form a favourable exception to the general state of the county. Yet, while Wirral exhibits as great a variety of methods, and as many bad specimens of farming as can be well conceived, it must be admitted that some of the farms approximate closely to an excellent state of cultivation. The hundred contains about sixty thousand acres of land, the greater part of which is far from good, although there are some



portions not exceeded by any in the kingdom. As manufactories are unknown, except in Birkenhead and Wallasey, the principal part of the inhabitants are dependent on agricultural pursuits, the markets of Liverpool affording a ready sale for their products.

Clay and sand form the most prominent features in the prevailing soils of Cheshire: and of these, tolerably strong retentive clay exists in the largest proportion. Generally speaking, the two earths are so blended together throughout the county, that it is only in particular districts that an observer could at once pronounce the soil to be either one or the other. On this account "the terms 'clayey loam,' or 'sandy loam,' as the clay or sand predominate, are the most accurately descriptive of the Cheshire soils" *Hall*. Sandy loam is met with in Wallasey, West Kirby, and near the estuary of the Dee; but clay abounds in almost every part of Wirral. The soil is very thin in most parts, with a substratum of rummel or clay. Rummel is a composition of various kinds of clay, white sand, and gravel, intimately mixed with a small portion of oxide of iron. It lies in strata of from 18 to 30 inches thick, on white or red sand, or on clay, which latter often partakes of its nature for a few feet. It is very unfavourable to vegetation, and barely penetrable by the roots of trees.

The stratum of soil being generally so poor and thin in Wirral, has caused marl, which is very abundant, to be used to a greater extent than in any other part of the county. Much benefit has accrued from its use, merely as increasing the quantity or depth of soil; and on light sandy soils it has the additional advantage, from the quantity of clay it contains, of having a tendency to stiffen the land, or, as Dr. Holland observes, "to bring it to that medium or neutralized state which appears the most decidedly favourable to vegetation." There is not any limestone found in Cheshire, except in the neighbourhood of Congleton; the comparatively small quantity of lime that is used in the Hundred of Wirral is brought from Wales, and burnt at the different kilns on the Mersey and the Dee.

The farm houses and buildings in Wirral are crowded together in villages, without any regard to the advantages of position or the regularity of construction. By this means the farmer is frequently thrown to the distance of two or three miles from his land; a circumstance productive of so many serious inconveniences, as to render the removal of its cause a measure in the highest degree desirable.

"The communication by roads is excellent, as far as respects the turnpike roads; the others, where no spirited proprietor has exerted himself, are proportionably bad,

and indeed must necessarily be so, from the manner in which the farm houses are grouped together, and the cattle driven along the lanes, which are seldom composed of any material but the natural clay, or the soft red sandstone. No higher praise can be given to the appearance of the hovels of the lower orders, which are, in general, extremely squalid. This class of the population, from its contiguity to the Principality, is mostly Welsh, or of immediate Welsh origin, and the patronymics of that country have nearly superseded the Cheshire names." *Ormerod*, ix. 190.\*

The great turnpike road for the hundred commences at the North gate of Chester, soon after which it divides into three branches; one, taking a north-east direction, runs nearly in a straight line, having various township and accommodation roads which communicate with the ferries on the Mersey; a centre line of road runs to a point more westward, towards West Kirby, where forming an acute angle it passes by Bidston Hill, and rejoins the former line at the north part of the town of Birkenhead; and the third is direct through the lands reclaimed from the Dee, to the Queen's ferry, where there is a public free floating bridge across the artificial channel. Arterial branches connect these roads with all the townships, thus affording an easy mode of transit to every part of the hundred, while the numerous ferries and landing places on the shores of the Mersey, present the greatest facilities for conveyance to the great markets on that river. The Chester and Birkenhead Railway having four intermediate stations connects those two towns at a distance of rather more than fifteen miles. As an intention exists of forming a branch line to Manchester, from the neighbourhood of Sutton, and also of cutting a Canal to connect the Dee with the works now in progress at Birkenhead, (for neither of which any prospectus has yet been issued, or the parliamentary notices given,) the subject will hereafter be resumed under the head of Birkenhead.

It is impossible to say anything in commendation of the fences, they are generally speaking exceedingly bad, and from the slovenly manner in which they are made up, they very imperfectly answer the purposes for which they were designed; many are allowed to run so wild, that they cover two or three yards on each side of the ditch, and are so high as in a great measure to prevent the circulation of air in small fields: there are some farmers who scarcely think it necessary to cut a hedge, unless thorns are

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\* Though this might have been correct five and twenty years since, when Dr. Ormerod wrote, it is very different now on the Mersey side of the Hundred, where the great bulk of the lower orders are natives of Ireland.

wanted to repair the gaps, or some other such occasion requires it, and then the work is performed most carelessly.

Ditches are more requisite in Wirral than in many parts of the kingdom, from the great quantity of rain that falls, from the flatness of the surface, and the prevalence of clay in the substrata. They are, however, sadly neglected, as in many instances the farmers do not cleanse them until they have become so full of mud that the water from them flows over the adjoining land.

During the last ten or fifteen years, a considerable improvement in the management of the land has been perceptible, which may be attributed chiefly to the diffusion of knowledge by means of agricultural societies, to the stimulus given by competition for their various premiums, and to the assistance rendered by some landlords in draining. The Wirral Agricultural Society has not confined its premiums to the production of the best crops, or to the best management of large farms, alone, but it has extended them to workmen in every class of farm labour, and even to domestic servants in proportion to the length of their servitude; hence, under the patronage of the leading gentry of the hundred, they have been productive of great benefit.

In 1843, the Royal Agricultural Society of England offered a prize of Fifty Sovereigns, or a piece of plate of that value,

“For the best Report on the present state of the Agriculture of the County of Chester, stating the ordinary course of cropping adopted in the different soils of the County; the breeds of cattle, sheep, and pigs, most generally bred or fed within it; the implements used; the number of horses or other cattle employed in the different operations of husbandry; the tenure on which the farms are generally held; the wages of labour; the average amount of the poors’ rate; and whether any and what alterations and improvements have been made in the system of agriculture pursued within it, since the Report of Henry Holland, which was published in the year 1808.”

The Council awarded the prize to Mr. William Palin of Stapleford Hall, near Chester; and from his Report they have published a variety of extracts in their Journal, extending over fifty-four pages.\* The entire Report will shortly be published; the following selections, from parts referring to Wirral, will show the great attention that has been paid to the subject by Mr. Palin, and how deserving his work is of a careful perusal by every agriculturist in the county.

“The Hundred of Wirral may be said to be a dairy district, where the farmer’s chief attention is paid to his grass land. The small quantity of land which he is allowed by his tenure

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\* Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society, vol. v., part 1. London : John Murray, 1844.

to plough or break up, varying in extent from one-third, one-fourth, and one-fifth of his whole farm, that portion which is under tillage is very soon reduced to poverty by wheat, oats, and clover in succession, with but little assistance of either manure or cleaning applied to it; and in many instances, the farmer comes to a standstill for want of produce of straw; he is then compelled to request his landlord to allow him to break up a piece of his grass land, 'to give him something,' as he says, and the tenant has no hesitation, in return, to consent that a piece of his old tilled land shall rest. Rest indeed it must, as probably it has not done so, in many instances, for forty years. There are very few tillage farms in the district; but where the occupiers have had the advantage of access to manure, and the capital wherewith to purchase it, and thoroughly drain the land, an advantageous course of cropping has been thus pursued, viz: 1st, clover, pasture, or if mown, manured; 2d, pasture; 3d, beans or vetches, drilled and partially manured; 4th, wheat; 5th, fallow and turnips, manured; and 6th, wheat, clovered down. This rotation applies to heavy wet land, where neither barley or oats can be advantageously grown." Page 69.

The tendency of Mr. Palin's opinion is evidently in favour of the granting of leases, and speaking of tenures and the improvements of farming in Wirral, he observes,

Yearly tenancies are most prevalent here. There are some instances of leases for seven, fourteen, and even twenty-one years, and where these have been granted, the tenants certainly appear more industrious and improving, and the landlords more generous and liberal. The good feeling which is said to exist between landowners and yearly tenants, has been strengthened by the granting of leases. p. 85.

DRAINAGE. Rapid strides towards improvement in this branch of husbandry have been made within the last six or eight years; but from the tenure being yearly, the credit or discredit (as the case may be) should rest entirely with the landlord. Where estates are unincumbered, and the owner of the estate has a wish to promote his own interest, as well as that of his tenant, much good has been done by tile draining; but very much yet remains to be done, both upon arable and pasture lands. About one-thirtieth part of the district has been drained within the last twenty years; this seems a small proportion, but I believe it will be found nearly correct." p. 80.

With the exception of this tile draining, no improvements of any consequence appear to have been made in the Hundred, and one of Mr. Palin's correspondents, whose opinion he adopts, says,

"Bone dusting, marling, and manuring, were quite as well understood in 1808, as they seem to be *here* now in 1844; and their increased application, and even draining, have only been practised in instances, where both tenants and landlords have been well satisfied that mutual advantages would arise from such improvements."

At a period when so many improvements have been made in agricultural imple-

ments, and so many new ones introduced, Wirral appears singularly backward in adopting them.

Implements vary in almost every parish in the district. The plough varies in size, shape, and make, just as the located wheelwright fancies he pleases his customers by new shapes or sizes of implements; little can be said in praise of any I have seen, and little will be said till the ploughman can do his day's work without a *driver*. p. 82.

Occasionally, however, Mr. Palin meets with something more deserving of notice. At the termination of his essay he details a tour through Wirral, which he

"commenced at Chester, and proceeded on in a westerly direction. About the middle of the Hundred observed a large tract of land in a most wretched state of cultivation, from want of draining; the land is very thin of soil, a great portion of clay being turned up in ploughing very shallow furrows; the butts are small and flat, in many fields not more than three feet wide, and in some not more than two feet six inches, every rein\* full of water, and the gutters not more than three or four inches deep. As I proceeded I found some better specimens of farming, and some very good on two farms, one of 500, and the other of 150 acres. On the former I witnessed an exceedingly interesting and novel sight, "Alexander's Draining Plough," it was drawn by sixteen horses, yoked eight abreast, then six, then two: by the first operation soil to the depth of sixteen inches was thrown out, by the second soil to the depth of eight inches more was cast up, leaving the drain twenty-four inches deep and five inches wide; the loose soil is then scooped out by an instrument for the purpose; when the tiles are laid upon slates cut for this work, sods are placed upon them and the drains filled up. It is calculated that the plough will drain, on an average, eight acres per day; and it is estimated by the gentlemen using it, that work which will be done by this clever invention for £6., would cost by spade-husbandry £7 4s." p. 110.

"No particular breed of CATTLE can be said to exist in Wirral. Milk being the main object of the farmer he does not consider any thorough breed particularly advantageous for that purpose: and I believe it has been stated with truth, that a cross between the old long-horn, short-horn, and Welsh cows, is considered a good sort for the dairy. In some particular spots of really excellent land, the pure short-horn, and the large Yorkshire cow, have been introduced with success; but some farmers object to them as too delicate to stand out in this wet climate. SHEEP. Scarcely any Sheep are kept where the dairy is the main object; in some instances the farmers buy a few Anglesea or Scotch Wethers, to eat up their stubble land in autumn, but the custom seems to be attended with doubtful success in most cases, and few make it a general rule to have sheep.† The Delamere sheep and the Clunn Forest sheep, are sometimes to be met with in small

\* Perhaps *veis* would be a better word, but "rein" is the provincial term for the lower furrow or division between the butts.

† So little do the leading Agriculturists of this part of Cheshire appreciate Sheep, that in most of their Societies they have erased from their list of Premiums all Prizes for them, whence it is evident they consider them a stock undeserving such a distinction.

numbers, but they are not regularly bred in the district. Pigs. Whatever may be said of the native breed of Pigs, a very great improvement has been effected of late years in this class of animals. They seem to be of the old Berkshire breed, with, in many instances, a cross of the Chinese, which when judiciously managed will give compactness and aptitude to fatten. I should say they are inferior to none in any county in England." p. 76.

In Wirral, where there is a dairy on most of the farms, the average annual production of cheese from each cow cannot be stated as more than two hundred weight, although in most other parts of the county it is about *three*. "This deficiency," the late Rev. Roger Jacson, rector of Bebington, remarked in a letter to Dr. Holland, published in his agricultural *Survey*, "originated in several obvious causes: few of the pastures are old grass lands, and they are in general stocked with cattle, to the breed and condition of which too little attention is usually paid by the farmer; the neglect of giving turnips or other description of green food in October and November, and their bad wintering, which is for the most part straw only, are additional circumstances which account, in a great measure, for the smallness of the produce from the cattle in the Wirral districts."

The application of the power of steam to purposes of navigation; justly forms an era in the history of maritime commerce, more important than any since the invention of the mariner's compass; but it may be doubtful whether the greater facility of communication, thereby afforded between distant countries, has been productive of greater advantage to this kingdom, than that more intimate and immediate connexion it has established on our shores. Perhaps no portion of the British empire has been more benefitted than the peninsula of Wirral, especially toward the shores of the Mersey, and within the last twenty years, in which secluded plains have been covered with magnificent villas and crowded streets, and worthless sandhills converted into tracts of amazing value. The rapid advance of improvement, and the increase of population, has far exceeded the calculation of the most sanguine, and Birkenhead, Tranmere, Wallasey, and the margin of the river, have received an impulse which nothing but a total stagnation of commerce in Liverpool, the heart from which all their vitality is derived, can now arrest. Under the most favourable circumstances the population of a county seldom increases in a greater ratio than fourteen, or at most fifteen per cent. in ten years, which has been shewn by the returns made under the acts for taking the census. The population of Wirral in 1811 was 11,579, and in 1841, it might by the decennial increase of even fifteen per cent, have been expected to amount to 17,600; but the

return exhibited the number as 33,047. This increase is in the lower division, and on the townships near the Mersey; the upper division has not increased eleven per cent. in ten years, while the lower has advanced at the rate of sixty-five per cent. This could not have been produced by any ordinary circumstances, it is principally to be attributed to that immigration from Liverpool, and more distant parts, that began to manifest itself soon after the introduction of steam-boats, which first appeared in the Mersey in the summer of 1815. From the paucity of inhabitants in Wirral, and the almost total want of accommodation on the Cheshire shore, they met with little encouragement for several years; but at length was realized the glowing description of the eloquent Canning, of "that new and mighty power, (new, at least, in the application of its might) which walks the water like a giant rejoicing in his course, stemming alike the tempest and the tide; accelerating intercourse, shortening distances, creating, as it were, unexpected neighbourhoods, and new combinations of social and commercial relations, and giving to the fickleness of winds, and the faithlessness of waves, the certainty and steadiness of a highway upon the land."

It is generally supposed that more rain falls in Cheshire than in any equal surface of land in the kingdom, Lancashire and Cornwall, perhaps, excepted, nor is it difficult to assign several causes for this fact. The county from its contiguity to the Irish Channel, possesses a temperature strongly impregnated with the sea air, while the frequent prevalence of westwardly winds bear with them an atmosphere loaded with moisture from the Atlantic, which the Welsh hills by their powerful attraction soon induce the clouds to deposit.

Owing to its relative situation Cheshire enjoys on the whole a more mild and temperate climate, than many counties situated in the same or even a more southern latitude. In winter the frosts are not often severe, nor does the snow continue long on the ground. The range of hills dividing the county from Derbyshire, which may with propriety be deemed the British Appenines, breaks the force of those easterly winds which are so peculiarly prejudicial to vegetation on the opposite coast of the island; while the prevalence of westwardly breezes during the larger portion of the year, produces an equality of temperature favourable both to the agriculture of the district and the salubrity of the climate. *Holl. 6.*

Wirral, from its peninsular position between the two great estuaries of the Mersey and the Dee, possesses a healthful and invigorating air and climate, and of

which it is very usual for the members of the medical profession in Liverpool to recommend their patients to avail themselves.\* It is a well-known fact that numbers have experienced a return to robust health, who appeared fast falling a prey to weakness and disease; and instances are indeed rare of persons and families leaving from choice, after they have once come to reside on the Cheshire side of the Mersey. The salubrity of the climate is incontestably proved by reference to the monumental records of every part of the hundred, which afford decided evidence of the longevity of the inhabitants.

Notwithstanding the number of troops that were constantly traversing the Hundred, from Chester, to the points of embarkation, both on the Dee and opposite Liverpool, the roads appear to have been in a very neglected state, and the difficulties of travelling are frequently alluded to in the Diary of Bishop Cartwright, in extracts similar to the following, by which it appears there was a public conveyance at that time, although its use was attended with much danger:

"26th February, 1687. I received a letter from Sir Charles Porter, by his servant, to borrow my coach from Nesson, when I heard of his arrival, which I cheerfully granted.

6th March. I sent my coach, after dinner, to Nesson to fetch Sir Charles Porter and his Lady to Chester, which found his children set in a stage coach, broke in the quick sands, three miles from Chester, and having brought them back, went forward again to fetch Sir Charles and his Lady, against to-morrow morning's tide."

The enclosure of the banks of the Dee would have lessened these difficulties, but for a century afterwards, a journey from Chester to Liverpool was considered an event of some importance. In the History of Liverpool published by M'Creery, in 1795, immediately after eulogizing some improvements then recently made in the communication between the two places, whereby the journey had been so shortened as to make it possible to accomplish it in four or five hours, the writer adds, "the safe way to secure the Coach is to take places at the Eastham Boat-house on the Dock, the day before they are wanted, otherwise a passenger may be disappointed of an inside place, for without this precaution they will sometimes find them previously engaged."

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\* "As an additional testimonial, a respectable medical practitioner lately informed the writer of this report," says the author of "An enquiry, into the Sanatory condition of Birkenhead," "that in such cases he generally lost them as patients in future by their remaining in Cheshire altogether." A rather equivocal testimony however, except the writer means to say they resided there for the future.



The Hundred of Wirral, called in Domesday Book, *Wilaveston*, appears to have derived the latter name from Willaston or Worlaston, a small township situated in the parish of Neston, about the centre of the hundred. The present appellation was certainly in use at an anterior period, for it is described in the Saxon Chronicles both as *Wirhall* and *Wirhael*. In the reign of Edward II., in some legal proceedings relative to the Priory of Birkenhead, Willawston and Wilaveston both occur; but from that time, they seem to have gradually fallen into disuse, and in a document issued by the crown within the last thirty years, it is called *Wirehal*, nearly the same as in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of Henry VIII., where it occurs as *Wirrehall*. There was formerly a subordinate hundred, that of Little Caldý; having jurisdiction over several townships, the profits of which were given by Edward I., as Earl of Chester, to Randal de Sutton, whose daughter and heiress married an ancestor of the Gleggs, a family that still possess certain lands near Chester, called the "Earls-eye," originally conveyed by the same grant as the Hundred of Caldý. This has led to the opinion, that Wilaveston Hundred merged soon after the Conquest, into that of Caldý, a Hundred which is frequently mentioned in documents relative to the Gleggs, until the latter part of the reign of Henry VII. The Bailiwick of Wirral, or the Court of the Hundred, is stated by Lysons, and several others, to have been vested in the Gleggs: it appears, however, to have been held by leases, varying for terms of from twenty to twenty-seven years. In 1786, it was leased to John Glegg of Neston for a term of twenty-seven years, at the expiration of which it remained in the hands of the crown, until the 8th April, 1820, when it was sold in fee to John Williams of Liverpool, an attorney, and conveyed by a deed of which the following is a copy.

*By the Commissioners of His Majesty's Woods, Forests, and Land Revenues.*

THESE are to Certify, that in pursuance of a Warrant from the Right Honourable the Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, bearing date the 8th day of February, 1820, William Dacres Adams and Henry Dawkins, Esqrs., two of the Commissioners of His Majesty's Woods, Forests, and Land Revenues, for and on behalf of the King's Most Excellent Majesty, have covenanted and agreed with John Williams of Liverpool, in the County of Lancaster, Esquire, for the sale to the said John Williams of "ALL that the Hundred of Wirehall, with its rights, members, and appurtenances whatsoever, in the County Palatine of Chester, and all those certainties or certain yearly rents to the said Hundred, or to His Majesty in right of the said Hundred,

belonging or appertaining; And also all and all manner of Courts Leet, Views of Frank-plege, together with the perquisites and profits of the same; And also all fines or amerciaments made, set, or imposed in the Courts of Sheriff's turn, and Hundred Court within the said Hundred, and Suit to the said Court or Courts, and also all reliefs, escheats, law-days, Courts, Assizes of Bread and Wine, Beer and Ale, Treasure trove, Waifs, Wrecks, Estrays, Goods and Chattels of Felons, Fugitives, Felons of themselves, Persons put or to be put in exigent, and of persons condemned or outlawed, Tolls, Customs, Deodands, Royal Fish, Rights, Jurisdictions, Privileges, Profits, Commodities, Advantages, and Emoluments whatsoever, to the said Hundred belonging, or in any wise appertaining; AND the reversion and reversions, remainder and remainders, of all singular the said premises and every part and parcel thereof, which said Hundred and premises are part of the possessions and land revenues of or belonging to the Crown within the Exchequer in England, and were last demised by His late Majesty King George III., by letters patent, under the Seal of the Court of Exchequer, bearing date the 8th day of April, 1786, to John Glegg of Neston, in the County of Chester, Esquire, To HOLD, except as was therein excepted, for a then reversionary term of twenty-seven years, from the 5th April, 1789, at an yearly or annual rent payable as therein mentioned, which term expired on or about the 5th day of April, 1816, at or for the price of Five Hundred Pounds of lawful money of Great Britain, to be paid by the said John Williams into the Bank of England, and carried to the account of the Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, and from and immediately after the payment of the said sum in manner aforesaid, and the enrolment of this certificate and the receipt for the said purchase money in the Office of the Auditors of the Land Revenues for the County aforesaid, and thenceforth for ever, the said John Williams and his heirs and assigns shall be judged, deemed, and taken to be in the actual seisen and possession of the said premises so by him purchased, and shall hold and enjoy the same peaceably and quietly and in as full and ample a manner to all intents and purposes as His Majesty, his heirs, or successors, might or could have held or enjoyed the same, excepting as hereinbefore is excepted by force and virtue of AN ACT of Parliament passed in the 56th year of the reign of His Majesty King George the Third, intituled An Act for ratifying the purchase of the Claremont Estate, and for settling the same as a residence of Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte Augusta, and His Serene Highness Leopold George Frederick Prince of Cobourg of Saalfeld. Given under the hands of the said Commissioners of His Majesty's Woods, Forests, and Land Revenues, the 8th day of April, 1820.

Signed by the Commissioners.

Receipt for the Purchase Money and  
Certificate of Enrolment.

Soon after Mr. Williams obtained possession of the Court he committed a forgery, and for which offence he was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to transportation for

life; during his imprisonment he executed a deed by which the court property was vested in his Father, who now holds the Court, of which Mr. John Peacock, Solicitor, of Liverpool, is the High Steward. \*

Wirral is seldom mentioned by the ancient historians, and little is known of the early inhabitants of the Hundred. Mr. Pennant, in the first volume of his "Tours in Wales," suggests an opinion relative to them that does not appear to have met with many supporters among those who have attended to the early history of Cheshire: speaking of a part of Flintshire he observes "the portion I inhabit was called Tegangle, which comprehends the three modern hundreds of Coleshill, Prestatyn, and Rhuddlan; the word is derived from Cangî or Ceangi, a set of people, according to the learned Baxter, belonging to every British nation; who attended to the herds, and resided with them in different grazing grounds at different times of the year. The neighbouring Carnavii had their Cangî, who wintered in Wirral, and took their summer residence in Tegangle, a word derived from *Teg*, fair; *Cang*, the name of the people; and *Lle*, a place. To corroborate which, at this very day is a plain, in the parish of Caerwys, a part of the old Tegangle, adjoining to this mountain, that still retains the title of *Mues can Havod*, or the plain of the hundred summer residences." pp. 6, 7.

For a long series of years, and especially after the withdrawal of the Roman Legions from Chester, Wirral suffered much from various incursions of the Welsh, and other marauders.† About 980, it was almost entirely laid waste by pirates, who, from their numbers and systematic mode of operation, are described by Higden in his

\* The Hundred or Wapentake of Wirral is held at Neston, for the recovery of debts not exceeding forty shilling, on every fourth Monday in the year. Cases have been brought before it as low as 2s., although the cost cannot be less than 8s. 5d. for issuing any process; and if heard before the Jury, the charges will amount to not less than £2 9s. 6d. to £2 15s.; the bailiff demands a fee of 8d. on serving a summons to appear; and there is an additional charge of 6d. for each mile from Neston at which the summons is served.

† In the Saxon Chronicles of 894, it is stated, they (the Danes) gathered the remnant again in East Anglia and from the Northumbrians, a great force before winter, and having committed their wives, their ships, and their booty, to the Earl Angles, they by force marched upon the stretch by day and night till they arrived at a western City in Wirheal that is called Chester." And in the following year, 895 "soon after that, in this year, went their army from Wirheal into North Wales; for they could not remain there more, because they were stripped both of their Cattle and their Corn." Ingram's Translation, 119.

See also Matthew of Westminster, who after relating the sufferings of the Danes in the siege of Buttingdune and their subsequent defeat, adds, "et qui ex hac clade evadere potuerunt, fugiendo, ad Legecestriane quæ Anglice Wirralis dicitur pervenerunt. Ubi in quodam municipio ex concivibus suis plurimos reperientes in eorum consortium sunt admissi, quo rex cum pervenisset, non potuit ibi obsidionem tenere, unde omnia quæ extra oppidum in frugibus sive victualibus reperit igne concremavit." (Fol. 1570. Page 348.)

"Life of St. Werburgh," as being *Subreguli*. At the conquest it shared the miserable fate of the greater part of England; for under the desolating sway of the Normans, all the Saxon landowners were ejected, and their lands, except a few townships belonging to the monastic institutions of Chester, were apportioned among the earl and his adherents. The bishop, indeed, was allowed to retain half of Great Sutton, and the secular canons of St. Werburgh Croughton, Little Sutton, Great Saughall, two-thirds of Wervin, one-third of Neston, and one-half of Raby; but these were soon wrested from them, and in 1093 the secular canons were finally expelled by Hugh Lupus, upon his founding the great Benedictine abbey at Chester. A lay barony was also established in Wirral in favour of Robert d'Avranches, the Norman baron of Rodelent, *Rhuddlan*, who enumerated among his other extensive possessions, the townships, in Wirral, of the two Mollingtons, Leighton, Thornton, Gayton, Heswall, Thurstaston, Caldy, Wallasey, Great Meols, and Little Meols. Shortly after his death, which took place during an engagement with the Welsh in the summer of 1088, (*see ante* 65, 66) the barony was broken up, and the estates reverted to the Earl. The eight barons of Chester also received large grants in Wirral from Hugh Lupus; William de Maldebeng, Malbank, or Nantwich, had Poole, Little Saughall, Upton, Thingwall, and Noctorum; Walter Vernon had Nesse, Ledsham, and Prenton; Hamon de Massie had Puddington, with other estates attached to his barony; William Fitz-Nigel, the constable of Chester, had Capenhurst, Barnston, half of Raby, and one-third of Neston, another third being retained by the minor canons of Chester, and the remaining third given to Robert the cook; Robert Fitzhugh had that half of Sutton which was not held by the bishop.

The principal part of the Hundred being thus divided between the Church and the palatinate barons, little remained for the minor chieftains. Caldy was given to Hugh de Mara, and Blacon to Ranulphus de Mesnilwerin, the ancestor of the present family of the Mainwarings.

The great barons not residing in the hundred, their estates were entrusted to the stewardship of their armed followers, who enforced with the utmost rigour every exaction which ingenuity could suggest, from those unfortunate natives that were yet employed upon estates once their own. Naturally of an active and warlike disposition, the inhabitants of Wirral frequently resorted to plunder, to satisfy the rapacious demands of their hard-hearted taskmasters, who willingly permitted

these predatory expeditions, in the profits of which they largely participated. Their ravages were frequently extended beyond the walls of Chester; yet though their booty was occasionally large, it brought them no permanent relief.

But the climax of their sufferings was reserved until 1120 to 1123, when Randal de Meschines, fourth Earl of Chester, irritated at these continued aggressions, caused all the farms to be destroyed, the boundaries of property to be removed, and the greater part of the hundred planted as a forest. The office of Bailiff, or chief ranger of the forest, he conferred upon Alan Sylvestre, together with the manors of Storeton and Puddington, to be held by service of cornage.

From Sylvestre, by several marriages with female heirs, the bailiwick of the forest passed to the Bamvilles and the Stanleys, together with the horn by which the right to the same was held, which horn yet remains at Hooton Hall. The privileges of the chief forester extended over the Hundred. Sir William Stanley, in answer to a *quo warranto* information, in the time of Edward III., admits of no exemptions from the forest laws, except to four townships comprised within the jurisdiction of the manors belonging to the Abbot of St. Werburgh, (viz.: Eastham, Bromborough, Irby, and Sutton,) and those which were claimed by the Priors of Birkenhead and of Stanlaw, under the charters granted by their founders, and confirmed by the Earls of Chester. The tenants of Burton were exempted in right of the ecclesiastical privileges of the Bishop, their manorial lord; and the tenants of Heswall were also excused by virtue of concessions granted to them by former Stanleys, as foresters.

For nearly two centuries and a half, the inhabitants of the forest, and the small villages on its borders, continued the mere serfs of the barons, ever ready to embark in any expedition against their more civilized or more opulent neighbours. At length the citizens of Chester suffered so much from the proximity of the forest, and the shelter it afforded to the freebooters, that they complained to Edward the Black Prince, then Earl of Chester, at whose request his father ordered it to be disforested. The Stanleys petitioned the king for remuneration for the loss of their fees, and the profits attached to the office of chief forester, which they valued at forty pounds per annum; but for which they were allowed only an annuity of twenty marks. The pension seems to have been but indifferently paid, as appears from the annexed extract taken from the Grosvenor MSS. xxi. 5.

" Meekly besecheth Will'm, of Stanlegh the elder, that whereas Will'm, of Stanlegh (besaiell to the saide Will'm, whose heire hee is), and his auncestors, have been seased of the office of M'r. fforestership of the fforeste of Wyrle, within the countie of Chester, which in the tyme of the full noble kynge, your progenitour, Edward the 3rd after the Conquest, was disaforest, and thereby the saide Will'm, and his heires, of the said office, and the profits thereof, which were yearly worth 40£ disinherit, which considerit by Richard, late kynge of England, your progenitour, second of the name after the Conquest, therefore bye his several l'res patentees, severally made and graunted to the said Will'm, besaiell, and after his dethe to Will'm, of Stanlegh his son, ayell to your said besecher xx markes yearly, as in the said l'res appeareth. That, if it like you to consider the premisses, and to graunte to yo'r said besecher, such said twenty markes, that he the said besecher will ever pray, &c.

The Church also had very great influence in Wirral. Every advowson in the Hundred, except Heswall and Woodchurch, was held by some monastic institution. Of the original foundation of many of the churches, little is known: Woodchurch, (*Llandechene*), Bebington, Neston, and Bromborough, (*Eastham*),\* had each, at the Domesday survey, a priest; and on the subdivision of the last manor, there is evidence of the *new* church founded in that part of the manor retaining the name of the saxon vill, being long called the Capella de Estham. Among the other churches of Norman foundation, were Haselwall and Thurstaston, probably severed from Neston, and both existing before 1300; Burton, in the Bishop's manor of that name, before 1238; and Upton, or rather Overchurch, probably taken from Woodchurch, being included in the same barony: Bidston, Lees-Kirk in Walsey, (*Wallasea*), and Backford, within the fee of the barons of Dunham: Backford appears to have been chiefly formed out of lands, severed from Upton, in the parish of St. Mary, Chester, with which it yet divides the tithes of one manor, and to which it has lost another. A church existing in 1305 in Birkenhead, also within this fee, clearly originated in the chapel of that priory founded by the third baron of Dunham. Stoke is proved to have been a dependency of the ancient parish church, which merged in the house of the secular canons at Chester, by an acknowledgment of the rights of the mother church with respect to burials, &c., the deed of which is contained among the charters of the Abbey; and Shotwich, which also belonged to the same house, was probably similarly situated.

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\* Neither Woodchurch, Bebington, or Bromborough appear in the survey, the former is evidently described as *Llandechene*, now *Landican*, Bebington as *Poulton*, and Bromborough as *Estham*, which will more particularly be shewn under the heads of those several townships.

Kirkby is omitted in Domesday; but immediately after that survey, Robert de Rodelent granted it, with its two churches; (the other of which was most probably Hilbre,) to the Abbey of Uttica; possibly this other might have been Wallasey, the remaining church, unless, as is very probable, the latter was built by the monks of Chester, who enjoyed one half of the rectory. (*See Dr. Ormerod's introduction, p. 50.*)

Over the properties the Church had thus acquired, the monks exercised the strictest discipline; enforcing rigid obedience to their orders, with service at their feudal courts. From certain law proceedings in 135S, it appears that the Abbot of St. Werburgh claimed to be entitled to estrays,\* waifs,† chattles of fugitives, and infangtheof‡ in his fourteen manors of Bromburgh, Childer Thornton, Chorlton, Croughton, Estham, Greasby, Irby, Knocktorum, Lea, Overpool, Great and Little Sutton, Whitby, and Woodchurch, and, also, in his fee of Shotwick, and Saughall. He also claimed to have view of Frankpledge,|| at his manor-house of Irby, for Greasby, Irby, Knocktorum, and Woodchurch; at Bromburgh for that manor and Eastham; at Little Sutton, for Childer Thornton, Overpool, Whitby and the Suttons; at Saughall, for the fees of Huxley, Saughall, and Shotwick; and at Upton, for Lea and townships in Broxton. The tenants of Raby did service at the court held in the ancient chapel of *St. Thomas a Becket*,§ at Chester, and other manorial rights were also claimed by the abbot, from the tenantry of church lands, in the townships of Bebington, Frankby, Hargreave, Little Meolse, Nesse, Neston, Poulton, and Puddington. The Priors of Birkenhead exercised similar privileges in their extensive possessions, as did the abbot of Stanlaw, and the minor institutions of Denhall, Hilbre, Poulton, and Puddington, in their respective manors.

\* Right to appropriate all *tame* beasts found wandering or astray. † Goods thrown away by a felon when pursued.

‡ Power to punish for theft &c. often commuted by a pecuniary consideration,

|| Right or custom to require security from males attaining the age of fourteen, for their fidelity to the Lord of the Manor, and good behaviour to their neighbours.

§ Among the most ancient of the Chantries of Chester, was the Chapel of St. Thomas a Becket. It occurs in the chartulary of St. Werburgh, as the cemetery of St. Thomas without the Northgate, in a deed executed about 1190. This chapel was situated at the northern extremity of Northgate-street; and gave name to the courts which the Dean and Chapter yet hold, and which were formerly held at this chapel, with jurisdiction over all residents in the town, beyond the Northgate, and the inhabitants of eight townships specified in the plea to a *quo warranto*, 31, Edward III. *Ormerod, Vol. i. 278.* Becket was canonized by a Papal bull in 1173, yet in 1221, in the very year that the body was taken up, in presence of Henry III. and a great concourse of the nobility, previous to its interment at Canterbury, the Doctors of the University of Paris had a warm dispute, whether he was, himself, saved or damned!

These circumstances mainly contributed to induce the principal owners of property in Wirral, not to make it their place of abode; and so it is found to have been the residence of few of the great manorial proprietors, till a comparatively recent date. There are, however, a few exceptions; as the Stanleys, who have continued to reside upon their estates from very early times; the Gleggs, a family of great antiquity, connected with most of the leading houses of the county, and who inherit in Wirral, through heirs female; and the Greens of Poulton, who are descended by the female line, from the ancient family of the Lancelyns of Poulton-Lancelyn, the remains of whose castle may yet be traced near the present hall, by one accustomed to antiquarian researches. The Poole and Bunbury families, who inherited several manors in this hundred at a very early period, resided for a great length of time upon their estates, but upon the acquisition of property in other parts of the kingdom they located there.

In hereafter noticing the several townships, it will be observed that many of the estates in Wirral have passed by heirs female to the ancestry of the present possessors; the unfortunate though almost natural result of that chivalric character the men of Cheshire have so long maintained. In the rebellion of the Percies, Cheshire suffered most severely, and in the battle of Shrewsbury,

“Where almost all the power of Cheshire got together,  
By Venables (there great) and Vernon, mustered thither;”

so fatal to many of the leading houses of the county, several of the gentry of Wirral, with many of their followers were slain. Nor was the conflict at Blore Heath less fatal to the county, upon “the chief men of which lighted the greatest plague there.” (*see ante p. 93.*) During the war of the Roses the principal knights, esquires, and gentry, ranged themselves in equal numbers under the banners of the houses of York and Lancaster, and the old nobility of the county was almost extinguished. In the 22nd song of his *Poly-Olbion*, Michael Drayton strongly paints this division, by assuming each fell by the hands of a relative:

There Button Button kills, a Bone doth kill a Bone;  
A Booth a Booth, and Leigh by Leigh is overthrowen;  
A Venables against a Venables doth stand,  
And Troutbeck fighteth with a Troutbeck hand to hand.  
There Molineux doth make a Molineux to die,  
And Egerton the strength of Egerton doth try.  
O Cheshire, wert thou mad! of thine own native gore,  
So much until this day thou never shed'st before.  
Above two thousand men upon the earth were throwen  
Of which the greatest part were naturally thine own.



And at the eventful battle of Bosworth Field, where

"A most select band of Cheshire Bowmen came  
By Sir John Savage led,"

They nobly maintained the high reputation of their county. The result of that battle was not so disastrous as the previous conflicts had been, although as before the gentry continued divided in their support of the rival factions. Sir John Savage the younger of Clifton, nephew of Sir Thomas Stanley, afterwards created earl of Derby, commanded the left wing of Richmond's forces, and was mainly instrumental in obtaining that victory by which he secured the crown of England. One of the first of Henry's regal acts was to reward Sir John Savage with various lands and manors, in the grant conveying which, express mention is made of his many brothers,\* kinsmen, friends, and servants, that he had brought into the field at his own expense.

The intimate connection between the house of Stanley and the county, most probably added to the contingency that Cheshire furnished to the field of Flodden, in 1513. Numbers of the gentry of Cheshire and Lancashire are mentioned as among the followers of Sir Edward Howard, who commanded the right wing of the English army; and the entire left was constituted out of soldiers from the two palatinate counties under the command of Sir Edward Stanley. The old ballad of Flodden Field speaks only of the strength, the courage, and the ferocity, of the Lancastrian troops, and of their unweildy arms; but the "armour gay," the numbers of the "gentle knights" and esquires of the "chosen children of Cheshire," are detailed in the most glowing colours. An estimate of the great proportion of troops levied on this county may be formed by the fact, that at the burning of Edinburgh, in 1544, when fifty-eight officers were knighted at Leith by the Earl of Hereford, no less than nineteen were members of the most distinguished Cheshire families.†

The endeavours of Henry VIII. to accomplish the dissolution of monasteries, met with no opposition in Wirral; Stanlow Abbey and several of the minor foundations had

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\* Sir John Savage, sen. of Clifton, Knt., was Mayor of Chester 2 Richard III. (1484) when "on one day of which year nine of his sonnes, viz. Sir John Savage the younger and eight of his brethren, were made free citizens of this city." Clifton, now called Rock Savage, with the greater portion of the estate presented by Henry, to Sir John Savage, has devolved upon the Marquis Cholmondeley, who bears the additional title of Earl of Rock Savage.

† Hollinshed (3 Vol. 387) has given the names of these nineteen knights; and also, of seven gentlemen, that were created esquires, by investiture with the Collar of SS and silver spurs, the day after the battle. Of these, the only person connected with Wirral, was Robert Birkenhead, son and heir of Sir Ralph Birkenhead, of Backford, first recorder of Chester, who was made one of the esquires.

previously fallen into decay, and had ceased to exist as religious establishments; Birkenhead surrendered at the first summons of the commissioners.

It was about this period the celebrated John Leland\* visited Cheshire, and the brevity of his remarks upon Wirral shew how unimportant he then considered it; and little more attention appears to have been paid it by Camden, who forty or fifty years afterwards revisited the hundred. Leland's account is as follows:—

“Wirall begynnith lesse than a quarter of a mile of the very Cite selfe of *Chester*, and withyn a 2 bow shottes of the suburbe without the north gate, at a little brooket called *Flokars Broke*, that ther commyth ynto *Dee* River; and there is a *Dok*, wherat spring tide a ship may ly. And this place is called *Porte Pool*; half-a-mile lower is *Blaken Hedde*, as an armlet of the grounde pointing oute; at this is an old manor place belonging to the Erle of Oxford, and theryn lyvith sum tyme Sir Gull. Norris.

A mile be water lower down, hard on the shore, is a little village caulled *Sauhelo* (*Saughall*) less than a quarter of a mile lower is *Crabho* (*Crabwall*) village; a mile lower is *Shottowick Castle* on the very shore, belonging to the *Kynge*, and thereby is a *parke*. *Shottowicke townlet* is a 3 quarters of a myle lower, and 2 miles lower is a rode in *Dee*, caulled *Salthouse*, and wher agayn it is on the shore is a *salthouse* cottage. Then is *Burton Hedde*, wherby is a village almost a mile lower than *Salthouse*, ii myles lower and more is *Denwall Rode*, and agayne it a firm place caulled *Denwaule Haul*, it longeth to Mr. Smith; and more ynto the land is *Denwaule* village. ii myles and more lower is *Neston Rode*, and ynward a mile into the land is *Neston* village; about 3 miles lower is a place caulled the *Redde Banke*, and ther half a mile within land is a

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\* The industrious antiquary JOHN LELAND, was born in London early in the sixteenth century, and was educated at St. Paul's School, under that celebrated grammarian and prince of pedagogues, William Lely. On quitting the University of Oxford, Leland entered into holy orders, and after having been appointed one of the King's Chaplains, was made Librarian. By a Commission in 1533, Henry VIII. appointed him the *King's Antiquary*, and furnished him with authority to search after “all England's antiquities,” and to peruse the libraries of all cathedrals, abbeys, colleges, &c. an appointment especially suited to the genius of Leland. Having a large salary attached to the office, he was at full liberty to devote himself to its duties, upon which he entered with the greatest avidity. Not content with ransacking the archives and libraries of every church, and monastery, and cathedral in the kingdom, he wandered from house to house, prying into every corner in which his lively fancy suggested some precious relic of ancient times might be sheltered. At length, after six long years of toil and travel, he returned to the metropolis, laden with the *spolia opima* of his arduous enterprize, and was rewarded with the rich living of Haseby in Oxfordshire, together with a stall in the Cathedral of Salisbury. He did not long reside at his rectory, or enjoy his prebend; for soon afterwards, he retired to a house of his own in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, where he was employed, for six uninterrupted years, in arranging and digesting his immense collections. The labours, he thus imposed upon himself, gradually overpowered his constitution, until, at length, nature gave way in the struggle, and reason, as well as health, forsook the emaciated student. He died in April, 1552. His papers were first consigned to the custody of Sir John Cheke, by whom, on his being obliged to retire to the continent, they were placed in the hands of Mr. Purefoy; from him they descended to Barton the historian of Leicestershire, who left those which are called the “Itinerary” to the Bodleian Library. Of all these Ralph Holinshed, Drayton, Camden, and others, have amply availed themselves, in their historical works. The “Itinerary and Collectanea” have been ably edited by Hearne, whose labours were published in nine volumes.

village cauled Thrustington ; a mile and more is West Kirkebey, a village near hard on the shore ; and half a mile lower is Hillebyri at the very point of Wyrall. This Hillebyri at the flood is all environed with water as an isle, and then the trajectus is a quarter of a mile over, and four fadome deepe of water, and at ebb a man may go over the sand.\* It is about a mile in cumpace and the ground is sandy and hath conies. There was a celle of monkes of Chester, and a pilgrimage of Our Lady of Hilbyri.

The Barre called Chester Barre, that is at the very mouth of the sandes, spreade out of Dee River is an 8 or 10 miles west-south-west from Hilbyri. It is by estimation a xvi mile from the point of Hilbery to crosse strait over to the next shore in Lancashire. For Lyrpool lyith a x miles into the land from the mouthe of Mersey water, and lytle lake of xx from the very barre of Mersey that lyeth in the mayne Se. From the point of Hilbyri to Lirpool as it lyith withyn the land a x miles. From Hylbyri to cumpace about the shore of Wyrall on Mersey side to Wallasey village, on the very shore, where men use much to salte Hering, taken at the se by the mouth of Mersey, is a 7 or 8 miles ; then a two miles to the Ferry House in Wyrall shore, and there is the trajectus proximus to Lyrpool a 3 miles over ; about half a quarter of a mile upward hard on Wyrall shore is Birket, late a priory of a xvi monkes as a celle to Chester, without any village by it. At the shore of Wyrall upon De side ys highe banked, but not veri hilly ground. And so go the bank of Wyrall on to Birket on Mersey side. The *Trajectus* from Hylbyri directly over thwart bytwixt Flint and Basingwerke is at the full se a vii miles over. *Hearne's Oxford Edit.* 1769, vol v. pp. 55, 56. *Leland's MSS.* fol. 54.

The following is the description of Wirral by Camden, written about 1582 :—

“The narrow point or Chersonesus running from the city to the north-west, enclosed by the Dee on one side and Mersey on the other, is called by us Wirall, by the Britons, from its being an angle, Killgurry. It was anciently all forest and uncultivated, as the inhabitants relate, but disforested by Edward III. at present it is thick set with towns on all sides, but happier in respect of the sea than the soil, the latter not being fit for corn, but the former plenteous in fish. On the entrance of this neck from the south stands Shotwick, a royal castle commanding the frith. To the north is Hooton, a manor which in Richard the second's time came to the Stanleys, who derive themselves from one Alan Sylvester, to whom Ranulphus, first Earl of that name of

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† The practice of crossing these sands, however, is by no means safe, and must be reprobated as being in the highest degree imprudent. Accidents have frequently occurred, such as is detailed in the following extract from a Newspaper. “On Wednesday last an inquisition was taken before Henry Churton, Esq., Coroner for the Southern Division of the County, at the Dee Inn, West Kirby, on view of the body of Elizabeth Hughes, late of Hilbre Island, who lost her life on the night of Tuesday, 1st October, when crossing the sands between Hoylake and Hilbre. A witness stated that as he was going to his work early on Thursday, his attention was drawn to a dead pony and shandry on the sand, near to Hoylake ; he subsequently found the body of Mrs. Hughes at the distance of about forty roods from the cart, and six dead sheep. It appeared that the unfortunate woman had gone to Liverpool on Monday, for the purpose of purchasing sheep, and in attempting to cross the sandbank, the tide had overtaken her. Verdict, *found drowned.*” October, 1844.

Chester, gave the Bailliwick of the Forest of Wirral, by delivery of a horn. To this adjoins Poole, whence the lords of the place, who have been long eminent, took their name; and near it Stan'aw, which the religious of the place translate the Stanley Hill, where John Lacy, Constable of Chester, founded a small monastery, afterwards, on account of the inundations, removed to Whalley in Lancashire. At this extremity of the Chersonesus lies a small, barren, sandy island, called *Il-bree*, which had formerly its own cello of monks." *Camden's BRITANNIA*, by Richard Gough, F.R.S., F.S.A. &c. London: Fol. Edit. 1789, vol. ii. p. 424.

About thirty years after Camden wrote, William Webb made a personal tour through Wirral, the particulars of which he minutely detailed in a manuscript, which falling into the hands of the engraver King, was published in his *Vale Royal*. It will be found in the *Appendix*, p. 10, together with a list of the resident gentry and freeholders at the period of his visitation, which was in 1621.

When England, in 1586, was threatened by the Spanish Armada, and voluntary contributions were made throughout the kingdom, towards defraying the expense of repelling the invaders, the gentry of Cheshire were particularly distinguished by their liberality. Among the heaviest contributors was the venerable Rowland Stanley, of Hooton, who was probably anxious to mark his disapprobation of the treason by which his son, Sir William Stanley, had not only delivered the fortress of Deventer into the hands of the Spaniards, but induced most of the troops under his command to enter into that service. Other catholics imitated the example of Sir Rowland; and the names of Poole and Whitmore, Bunbury and Massey, high on the list of subscriptions, attest that Wirral was not behind the other parts of the county in loyalty.

Wirral for a long period presents nothing of importance, and during the civil war the military operations, were confined to the taking and occupation of the fortified hostelry that then existed at Birkenhead, to occasional ravages on the estates of the respective partizans near Chester, and the frequent transit of troops, to and from Ireland, by way of Parkgate, Dawpool, and other places on the eastern shore of the Dee.

Soon after the surrender of Chester, parliament issued an ordinance for sequestering the property of all "delinquent papists, spies, and intelligencers;" and subsequently, power having been given to the Committee of Sequestration to allow parties to compound for their estates, on payment into the public treasury of such sums as might be agreed upon, the following residents in Wirral compounded with the Commissioners, at the amounts attached to their respective names:—

Sir William Massey of Puddington, Knight, £1210, with £34 per annum settled.

Henry Bunbury of Stanney, Esq. £868, with £25 per annum settled. Valentine Whitmore of Thurstaston, £250; Richard Etonhead of Sutton, £92 2s.; John Taylor of Brimstage, £74; Thomas Penket of Sutton, £66 5s.; John Frogg of Whitby, £58 8s.; William Parkington of Worrall, £5.

Either the Commissioners must have been very partial in their adjudications, or the gentry of Cheshire far exceeded those of Lancashire in wealth. In the latter, there were only seven who were charged at upwards of five hundred pounds, and only two above one thousand, viz: Robert Rawlingson of Marsh Grange, £7046, and Sir Edward Mosley, £4874; while in Cheshire, in addition to the above, were Lord Cholmondeley, £7742, Peter Venables of Kinderton, £6150, Sir Thomas Wilbraham of Woodhey, £2500, Lord Kilmorey, £2306, Sir Thomas Smith of Chester, £2150, Lord William Brereton, £1738 18s., Sir Thomas Delves, Bart. of Doddington, £1484 10s., Sir Richard Grosvenor of Eaton, £1250, Lord Rivers, £1110, John Billet of Moreton, £1005 5s., and upwards of twenty others rated at more than five hundred pounds.

In the subsequent events of 1715 and 1745 the peace of the Hundred was not in the slightest degree affected, nor has any event more recently occurred that deserves notice. The excitement that has occasionally prevailed in the manufacturing districts of the county has never extended to Wirral, to which may probably be attributed the fact that the Hundred does not contribute to the Yeomanry Cavalry, the Wirral troop having been disbanded for many years.

The County of Chester contains, according to Dr. Holland's survey, 676,000 acres of land, of which 620,000 acres were then in a state of cultivation, 18,000 consisted of peat and bog, 28,000 of waste, commons, and woods, and 10,000 were lands recovered from the sea. The total acreage thus given by Dr. Holland, nearly corresponds with that stated by the parties employed on the census in 1841, who returned Cheshire as containing 673,280 acres, which is within a fraction of the return made under the Ordnance survey. In the accompanying table, which is entirely extracted from official documents, the acreage of each township is given as it appears in the County books; but they are not by any means correct, although they are adopted by the magistrates, as the datum by which the county rates are arranged.\* The hundred has been

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\* "Attempts have been made without success to obtain authentic information, by which the apparent inaccuracies that exist

apportioned by the magistracy into two districts; the Eastern division, which contains 31,663 acres, principally devoted to agricultural purposes; and the Western, which contains 28,249 acres, of a more varied character.

“The strata in the hundred furnish little of interest to the geologist, the new red sand stone group in this district of the county, being almost devoid of fossils, the general absence of calcareous matter, and containing neither gypsum or salt, though in close proximity to those immense deposits of muriate of soda on the shores of the Weaver. This group in Wirral, consists almost exclusively of red loam, clay, and sand stone, in alternate beds, and does not conform to the late sub-division of the upper new red stone formations of some parts of England and Germany. The rock is strongly contrasted in colour, as may be observed by examining the quarries in the adjacent townships of Tranmere and Storeton. The stone from the latter is of a fine bright grey colour, and minute in texture when compared with that of Tranmere, affording a material for building, at once cheap, easily worked and durable, while it is adopted to the finest tracery of architectural design.

The difference of texture and contrast of colour, can only be attributed to the peculiar circumstances attached to the disintegration of these immense masses of detritus; the frequent occurrence of mica and hornblende being common to both, and to the decomposition of which, the prevalent colour of the new red sandstone has been referred. This formation overlies the carboniferous group and the connection between the coal fields of North Wales on the banks of the Dee, and those of Lancashire, its general depth to the coal measures being, according to Murchison and Coneybeare, about 600 feet.” *Communicated by Mr. J. A. Brine, C. E.*

Various attempts have been made to ascertain the existence of coal in Wirral, and although borings have been made to a great depth, no discoveries of that valuable mineral have been made, except in the townships of Nesse and Little Neston, where mines have been worked to advantage for many years. These mines extend nearly a mile under the estuary of the Dee, towards those of Hawarden, which have been known upwards

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in the computation of the acres might have been remedied, but nothing short of actual survey would be calculated to give a more accurate result than has been obtained from the labours of the late Mr. Rickman.” *Official Report, Census Office, 1843-4.* In almost every instance, where parishes have been measured under the tithe commutation act, considerable errors have been found to exist; as in the parish of Wallasey, that has recently been surveyed, Liscard by actual admeasurement, contains 896 acres—by the magistrates’ books 841. Poulton is stated at 646, instead of 669; and Wallasey at 1789 acres, instead of 1542, as measured by Mr. Palin.

of four centuries, having been mentioned in a marriage contract, preserved in the *Harl. MSS.* 2038, *p.* 54, in the 4th Hen. VI. The Neston collieries were first worked in 1757.

The population of Wirral was returned in 1841 at 33,047, a number that has since been considerably increased, and from the best estimate that can be formed, it may be assumed at being not less than 40,000. The intelligence of the trading community of Liverpool has long been proverbial throughout the mercantile world, and except the other portions of Cheshire are vastly inferior in the number of persons qualified to decide on matters of intricacy, it would appear the authorities of the county regard the inhabitants of Wirral, as partaking of the intelligence of the town, from which they may be considered as colonists. Year after year have the Wirralites to complain of the undue proportion, in which they are summoned from their homes to attend as jurors at Chester: not one-tenth of the inhabitants of Cheshire reside in Wirral, yet of the five special juries summoned at a late assizes, amounting to 120 persons, five townships in Wirral furnished no less than three-fourths the entire number; Liscard and Seacombe supplying 18, Birkenhead and Tranmere 61, and Bebington 12; Leighton and Neston each contributed only one, and the remaining six hundreds of the county 27. This is vexatious enough even when it is occasioned by parties residing in the county; but when, as is too often the fact, persons are summoned to Chester to try causes from Wales, for parties who, knowing the estimation in which they or their attorneys are held in their own locality, dare not trust their case into the hands of their own countrymen, some measure should be adopted to exempt jurors from the trouble and expense they incur for non-attendance on such causes.

The alterations that have latterly taken place in the northern part of the hundred, and the numerous and extensive works that have been announced, and some of which are now in progress, have attached a value and importance to that portion of Wirral which appear to entitle it to a share in the representative branch of the legislature. The national importance of the great undertakings at Birkenhead, and the various interests connected with them, occasion incessant calls on the time and the services of the members for the County of Chester, and it is worthy of consideration whether the time has not arrived when those gentlemen should be relieved from these onerous duties, and the public interests of the inhabitants of this part of the Hundred confided to their own representatives.

Into these pages no feeling of a political nature will ever enter, nor does any wish

to agitate or open the question of reform, lead to the expression of the opinion that it would be advantageous that the lower part of Wirral, if not the town of Birkenhead, should have its own members in the House of Commons. The entire population of Cheshire is about 160,000, and that portion of Wirral described by the magistrates as the lower or western division contains about 30,000; the only right of voting for members in parliament that they now have, is enjoyed in common with the freeholders of the other four hundreds, some of them situate at a considerable distance, with interests by no means similar to those of the Inhabitants of Wirral. A reference to parliamentary returns will shew that the townships of Birkenhead, Tranmere, Liscard, Poulton, and Wallasey, have a greater number of inhabitants than any one of the five smaller counties now represented in parliament; and Birkenhead alone has a resident population greater than any of the eighty-seven cities and boroughs, in England, which return no less than one hundred and forty-two members, although no ten of them taken collectively yield as large an amount of revenue to government. In Ireland also, there are two Archiepiscopal and twenty-two other cities and boroughs, with considerably less inhabitants than Birkenhead, and which in the aggregate return twenty-four members to the House of Commons.

Few good specimens of ancient architecture remain in Wirral. The halls of Pool and of Brimstage, formerly the seat of the Domvilles and the Hulses, and that of Hooton, long commanded attention, but the two former have dwindled into farm houses, and the ancient residence of the Stanleys has been replaced by an elegant new stone mansion from designs by Wyatt. Fragments of what is usually termed Saxon architecture may yet be found in the churches of Bebington, Stoke and Shotwick; and a part of the old chapter-house at Birkenhead Priory, appears to bear a nearer resemblance to the period when that style prevailed, than to that of its reputed foundation. In other parts of those ruins, and in the chancel of Bebington, are fine specimens of pointed gothic.

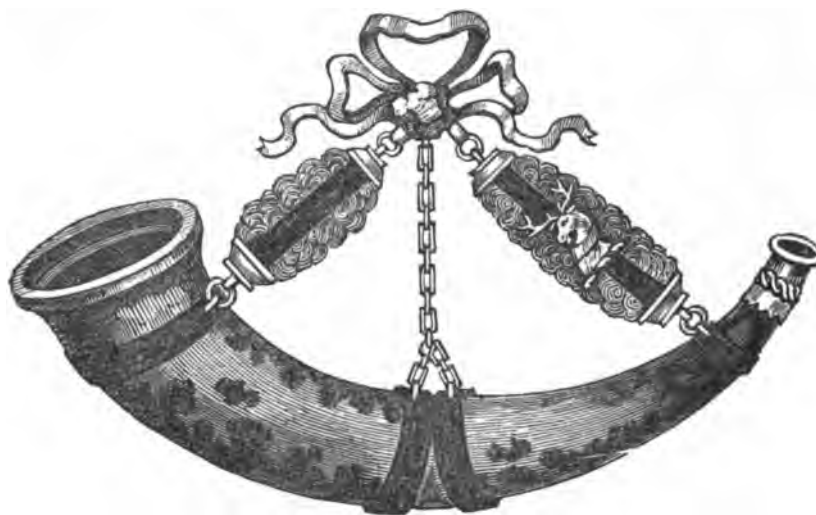
There are few districts of equal extent, that present ecclesiastical remains of such little interest, for the increasing population of the hundred during the last few years has caused the alteration, and in several instances the removal of the more ancient churches, on the site of which larger fabrics have been erected. Of Stanlaw Abbey, the "celle of Hylbri," and the hospitals of Denwall, Burton, and Lancelyn, hardly a vestige can be traced.

In 1829, an act of parliament was obtained for the establishment of a con-



stabulary force in Cheshire, by which each Hundred is placed under the direction of one special high constable, who has under him certain subordinates, in proportion to the size of the district. This is distinct from the parochial or township constables, who are appointed by the inhabitants; and the aletasters, burleymen, and other officers nominated at the various baronial or leet courts yet held in several of the manors of the Hundred. Birkenhead is the head quarters of the "Special High Constable of Wirral," on account of its being more densely populated than any other part, and having greater facilities of communication.

The Earl of Stamford and Warrington is lord-lieutenant of the county, which has one hundred and forty-eight magistrates; fifteen of whom reside in Wirral. Petty Sessions are held weekly, at Birkenhead and Liscard for the lower or western division of the county, and at Chester every Saturday for the upper or eastern division, exclusive of the General Quarter Sessions of the Peace, which are held alternately or by adjournment every six weeks at Chester or Knutsford. The magistrates meet monthly, for the dispatch of the general business of the Hundred, at Parkgate.



## The Parish of Backford.



THE parish of Backford comprehends the townships of Backford, Chorlton, Lea, and Great Mollington, in the Hundred of Wirral, and Caughall in that of Broxton, all of which are included in the deanery of Wirral.

Although Mollington is the only portion of this parish mentioned in the Domesday Survey, there is little doubt that the greater part of Backford was assigned either at the conquest or soon afterwards, to the barons of Dunham, as not only was the manor and church of Backford given by Hamon the third Baron of Dunham to the Benedictine Priory he had founded at Birkenhead, but about the same period Robert de Massey his son, gave some land at Lea, to the convent of St. Werburgh. In the life time of Hamon the sixth Baron of Dunham, the manor of Backford passed to the Masseys of Timperley, with whom it continued until 1424, when by marriage of their sole heiress it became the property of Richard de Chatterton.\* His only daughter married Richard de Radclyffe, in whose family and that of the Parres the estates remained until 1570, when Robert Parre alienated them to Thomas Aldersey a merchant, who shortly afterwards sold them to Henry Birkenhead. The Birkenheads continued in possession of Backford until the family became extinct in heirs male, in 1724, upon the death of Thomas Birkenhead, Esquire, who left two nieces, coheiresses. The elder, Frances, married John Glegg of Irby, Esq., and the younger William Glegg of Grange, Esq. Upon the decease of the latter without surviving issue, the entire property became united, and is now held by Edward Holt Glegg, Captain in the Rifle Brigade, who succeeded to the estates, on the sudden decease of his brother, Baskervyle Glegg, a Captain in the twelfth Royal Lancers, who had only taken possession a few months

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\* See Mandate to the Excheator, now in the Exchequer at Chester to deliver to him, dated 21 July. 2 Henry VI.

before, on the demise of his father, Lieutenant-General Birkenhead Glegg of Backford, grandson of John and Frances Glegg above named.\*

The village of Backford is situate immediately adjoining the turnpike road from Chester to the river Mersey, at a distance of three miles from the former. This road a short distance from the village crosses a deep valley; that separates the hundred of Wirral from that of Broxton, and from which the parish undoubtedly derives its name; the Saxon word Ford, signifying a way, and Bach, a valley. The township contains 687 acres of land, and is valued in the county books at £1052. The number of its inhabitants at the census of 1841 was 200, nearly all of whom are engaged in agricultural pursuits, the land throughout the entire parish, which contains 2982 acres, being in general of excellent quality, and most of it considered of higher value than any other in the Hundred.

The old hall of Backford has been taken down, and its site occupied by a large handsome brick mansion, built by the grandfather of the present proprietor. The grounds from the contiguity of the turnpike road, are necessarily confined; but they were most judiciously laid out by Webb, the tower of the parish church grouping well with the plantations, and the boundaries being successfully concealed. Backford Hall appears to have first become the residence of the Birkenheads in 1605, in which year the entries of their baptisms commence there, and cease at Waverton, the parish church of their other residence at Huxley.

The church of Backford dedicated to St. Oswald, is seated on a pleasing eminence adjacent to the road. It was given by the third baron of Dunham Massie, then lord of Backford, to the Benedictine Priory at Birkenhead, and was valued in the taxation of Pope Nicholas at £5 6s. 8d. That valuation was made in the year 1292 soon after which, the appropriation and the endowment of the vicarage must have taken place, as in the year 1305 the prior of Birkenhead presented one Willielmus de Acton to the vicarage. From that date to 1482 the records of the church are complete, and shew the appointments of seven successive vicars by the priors of Birkenhead; a lapse of a century then occurs, until 1582, when the presentation was made by the bishop of Chester. At the dissolution the rectory which for a long period had been held by the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh, at Chester, and the advowson of the vicarage, were

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\* General Glegg died at Liverpool, on the 9th December, 1842: the Captain at Manchester, on the 26th October, 1843.

made part of the endowment of the new bishopric, the rectory having been previously valued in the ecclesiastical taxation of 26 Henry VIII. at £12 6s. 8d. and the vicarage at £5 0s. 4d. including an annual pension of £1 from the patron prior of Birkenhead.

The great tithes of Backford are held on lease for lives from the Bishop of Chester, who is the patron. All the other tithes belong to the vicar, with the exception of one half of those of Chorlton, claimed by the rector of the parish of St. Mary, Chester. The present vicar is the Rev. Francis Bryans, the value of whose incumbency is returned in the Clergy list of 1841, at £230 per annum. The church consists of three aisles, separated by pillars, with a chancel, nave, and a tower, once handsomely ornamented with battlements and finials, though now much decayed. The windows are in the gothic style, the mouldings and cornices enriched with foliage and grotesque carvings. The great east window contains some fragments of stained glass, and some remains of an inscription, which once recorded the name of Richard de Radclyffe, by whom the window was constructed, in the reign of Henry VI., a date that corresponds with the style of the tower, which is also supposed to have been built at his expense. This tower and some small portion of the nave, are the only parts of the ancient building which remain; the entire body of the old fabric having been removed in 1728, when the present church, one of the neatest in the hundred, was erected. A small gallery has been added within the last few years, by the subscription of the principal inhabitants, assisted by a grant from the Incorporated Society for Building Churches.

The church contains several monumental records of the ancient family of the Gamuls, of Moston, which township was formerly considered as included in the parish of Backford; and also details of various legacies left for the use of the poor.

"All the sums of money bequeathed for charitable purposes, in this parish, have been lost, with the exception of one hundred pounds, vested in the funds, in the names of the vicar, John Feilden, and B. Glegg, Esqrs. Another small piece of land, situate between the residence of John Feilden, Esq., and the adjacent highway, is held on lease from the poor of the parish, by Mr. Feilden (whose stables are built thereon,) by virtue of a lease to George Hunt, of Great Mollington, for 99 years from 1742, at the rent of £6 per annum. Part of the interest and rent arising therefrom, is expended in a weekly distribution of bread to the poor on Sundays, and the rest given on Easter Tuesday."—*Ormerod*, ii. p. 203.

In the digest of the reports made by the Commissioners of Inquiry into Charities

in 1837, and published by authority in 1843, the annual revenue of the charities of Backford, is stated "at £25 11s. 4d., of which £15 4s. arises from the rent of a house and six acres of land, and £10 7s. 4d. from the interest of £296 5s., vested in the 3½ per cents; of which £12 was annually appropriated to educational purposes, whereby from twenty to thirty boys are annually taught reading, writing, and arithmetic." At present there are upwards of a hundred children in the schools.

### GREAT MOLLINGTON.

The township of Great Mollington, Mollington Torront, or Torrold, is the only part of the parish of Backford that is mentioned in Domesday Book, where it occurs under the name of Molintone, as being held by Robert de Rodelent, the Norman baron of Rhuddlan. Upon the death of this important personage, who was at once the friend, partner, relative, counsellor, and general-in-chief of the forces, of Hugh Lupus, with possessions that extended from Wallasey, along the shores of the Dee, over the great portion of North Wales, without legitimate issue, (*see ante*, 65 *et* 67,) his estates reverted to the Earl; and there is no record of the manor of Molintone until the second year of Edward II. when William Torrand obtained from James, son of Roger de Coghul, lands in Mollington; and early in the following reign he acquired other lands, with the manor of Mollington from William de Backford, then chaplain. Soon after this, another lapse occurs in the descent of this property, which is not again mentioned until a *post mortem* inquisition, 8 Henry V. by which it appears that Edmund de Eulowe died, seized of the manors of Neston and Mollington. The mode in which he became possessed of Neston is ascertained, but there is no trace of that by which he obtained Mollington. His heiress Katherine married Roger Booth, brother of Sir Robert Booth, founder of the house of Dunham Massey. In the family of their descendants it remained until 44 Elizabeth\*, when it passed by marriage to the Mordaunts of Bedfordshire; soon after which they alienated their Cheshire estates, and the manor of Mollington fell into the hands of the Gleggs, of Gayton, who had for some time previously held the paramount royalty. Upon the marriage of Mary, daughter, and ultimately sole heiress, of Robert Glegg, of Gayton, Esquire, in 1758, to John Baskervyle, of Old Withington, Esquire, the manor of Mollington was conveyed with other estates to him; and soon afterwards was sold to Thomas Hunt, Esq. the representative of a family that had previously settled in the township, upon the purchase of the much more considerable

estates that formerly belonged to the Gamuls. In 1797, the widow and the daughter of George Hunt, grandson of the purchaser of the manor, sold it, with all their estates, to John Feilden of Blackburne in the county of Lancaster, Esq. with whom it yet remains. Mollington Hall is a handsome and very spacious brick mansion, standing on an elevated position nearly surrounded by thickly wooded plantations, which have been much improved by Mr. Feilden. Soon after this gentleman made it his residence, he obtained the highest honour in the County, having served the office of High Sheriff in 1803.

The Township of Great Mollington, which extends over 824 acres, is valued for County purposes at £888. Its population in 1801 was 101, and by the last census 140. The site of the old mansion is unknown, but that of the ancient manor house is now occupied by the hall, the owner of which yet holds a Court-leet and Court-baron for the manor.

### CHORLTON.

As there is no specific mention of Chorlton earlier than towards the close of the twelfth century, it seems probable that it had previously been included in the general designation of the *vil* of Backford. The connection between this township and the Abbey of St. Werburgh, at Chester, may be traced to an early period, for during the Abbacy of Robert de Hastings, from 1186, to 1194, he gave to William Fitz-Warner, certain lands in Chorlton, and several grants are yet preserved, of estates in the township, given to that monastery, during the reigns of the first and second Edwards.

At the dissolution, these estates formed part of the endowment of the dean and chapter of Chester; but they were obtained from them by Sir Richard Cotton. Ultimately by the charter of the 22nd of Elizabeth, the lands were ordered to be held by the fee-farmers, upon a rent directed to be paid to the dean and chapter.

Numerous alienations have since taken place in the lands of Chorlton; the principal landholder in the township at present is James Wicksted Swan, of Chorlton Hall, Esq., grandson of the late Richard Wicksted, Esq., (heir male, of the Wicksteds, of Nantwich, who branched from the Wicksteds of Wicksted, *temp.* Henry VIII.) who purchased Chorlton Hall, about the year 1796. Chorlton is situated about four miles from Chester. In 1801, it contained 12 houses, occupied by 68 persons, the return by the last census was 85. The land, which consists of 490 acres, is considered as the most fertile in the hundred, and is valued in the county books at £946 per annum, being at a greater rate per acre than any other township in Wirral.

Chorlton Hall, a large modern stone building, stands on a rather elevated situation, commanding an extensive view over the range of the Forest and Frodsham hills. It is now undergoing considerable alterations. The Township is bounded on the South by the Chester and Ellesmere Canal, which separates Broxton Hundred from that of Wirral.

In this township was the residence of *the Historian of Cheshire*. For six long consecutive summers and autumns did Mr. Ormerod emerge from his house at Chorlton, to examine into every parish and township in the county; returning in the winter and spring to London, to consult the Harleian MSS. and other literary treasures of the metropolis. Frequent are the quotations made from his magnificent work; but none can be more correctly applied to Mr. Ormerod, than the character which he gives of Sir Peter Leycester, for, indeed, "it only remains to repeat every praise that can be due to the natural ability of that historian, who to indefatigable perseverance in searching after truth, united honesty and fearlessness in uttering it."

#### LEA.

The township of Lea, which is situated immediately to the westward of that of Backford, contains 671 acres, valued in the county books at £534 per annum, and has a population of 115 persons occupying sixteen houses. It is divided from Backford by a small rivulet, which flows down a deep valley, that branches from the larger one, which forms the boundary of the two hundreds.

The Manor of Lea was part of the original endowment of the monastery of St. Werburgh, and its inhabitants did service to the Abbots, in their court, at Upton. In the thirteenth century, much of the land in the township was appropriated as part of the official estate of the master or chief cook of the Abbot. This office was hereditary, and by virtue of it, the cook was entitled to certain perquisites of, and in the kitchen, together with eight bovates of land, in the neighbouring township of Huntingdon, which in the abbacy of William de Marmion, 1226 to 1228, were exchanged for an equal quantity in Lea, and Newton. The duties of the office were divided between the two daughters and co-heirs of the then cook, Geoffrey the son of Gunware, or as he is called from his station, Galfridus Cocus. These perquisites and estates were assured to the representatives of Geoffrey, by Thomas de Capenhurst, abbot from 1249 to 1265, and are detailed at length in the chartulary of the abbey, quoted in the Harl. MSS. 1965.

At the dissolution, the manor of Lea was granted, with Whitby and Overpool, to William and John Glasier, and in 1709 it passed under a decree in Chancery, by the foreclosure of a mortgage from Thomas Glasier, to George Naylor, of Sussex, Esq., by whose successor it was sold to Thomas Bootle, of the Inner Temple, Esq. Having been conveyed by the marriage of his niece to the ancestor of the present Lord Skelmersdale, his lordship in 1802, then being Edward Wilbraham Bootle, Esq., M.P., and Mary, his mother, sold the manor to John Feilden, of Mollington, Esq., to whom the greater part of the township now belongs.

Lea Hall, described by Webb, "as a fair house and fine demesne, and hath been the mansion for some descents of the Glaziers, Esquires, of special note and good account," (*See Appendix*, 11,) has long been demolished, and its site occupied by a building, that has been used for many years as a farm house. The old hall was composed of timber frame-work, the interstices of which were filled up with brick, resting on a stone foundation. The family of the Glasiers, though so favourably mentioned by the Itinerant of the Vale Royal, were Manxmen, allured to England by the prospect of participating in the revenues of the dissolved monasteries. They were early associated with Sir Piers Dutton, one of the principal and most active agents in the plunder of the Cheshire ecclesiastics.

The descendants of the Glasiers, Glaziers, or Glasiours, lived at the hall for several generations, but the family is now supposed to be extinct.

## CROUGHTON.

### IN THE PARISH OF ST. OSWALD, CHESTER.

Croughton is situated about four miles north by east from Chester, between the parishes of Backford and Stoak, on the banks of the Chester and Ellesmere Canal, which separates it from the other townships of St. Oswald's parish in Broxton.

The manor of Croughton was given by Hugh Lupus, to the monastery of St. Werburgh, at its foundation by him in 1093, and by virtue of that grant, the Abbot of Chester in the 31 Edward III., maintained his right to various manorial privileges, together with the view of frankpledge, at his manor court of Upton. At an early period Croughton was considered part of the parish of Stoak; but all the ecclesiastical and other profits were released to the abbey of Chester by Roger de Soterlegh, the earliest



recorded patron of Stoke, whose name appears previously to 1300, in a deed yet extant.\*

It continued in possession of the convent until the dissolution, when it was given to the Dean and Chapter of the newly formed Diocese of Chester, but was soon afterwards obtained from them, with the greater part of their possessions by Sir Richard Cotton. In consequence of some informality in the deeds, it passed to his son, George Cotton, by whom it was sold, 13 Elizabeth, to Richard Hurlestone, Esq., the sale being afterwards confirmed by the Queen, subject to an annual payment to the Dean and Chapter of £7 0s. 4d. The last Mr. Hurlestone, who held the manor, dying in 1720, without heirs male, his two nieces and co-heiresses, conveyed it, with the estate in moieties, to the predecessors of the present Lord Kilmorey and of John Hurlestone Leeche, of Carden, Esq. who died 30th November, 1844. Croughton contains 271 acres of land, valued at £272; it is, perhaps, the only township in the county, that exhibits a decrease in the number of its inhabitants during the last forty years; the numbers in 1801, being 33, and in 1841, only 27 persons.

"A singularly romantic dingle, called the Dungeons, branches from the valley which forms the line of the Chester Canal, in this township, and extends upwards of half a mile, the sides being uniformly overspread with almost impervious thickets, and the bottom covered with sand and sea gravel, of a nature which strongly tends to shew its having been deposited there by the waters of the sea, and confirms the theory of the Mersey having passed through the valley, between the Hundreds, to a confluence with the Dee, below the walls of Chester."—*Ormerod*, ii. p. 210.

#### CAUGHALL OR COGHULL.

The little township of Caughall, which is part of the parish of Backford, though situated in the Hundred of Broxton, contains 310 acres, and has 16 inhabitants, who occupy the only two houses in the township. One half of the land is the property of Sir William Massey Stanley, Bart., to whom it has descended from Sir John Massey, of Puddington, who appears by an *Inq. p. m.* 5 Edward VI. to have held a moiety of the township under the King, as Earl of Chester. The other portion belongs to the Trustees of the Whitchurch Grammar School, having been purchased about the same period for that institution.

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\* The deed however is partly illegible, as it was when Randal Holme attempted to decypher it. Harl. MSS. 1965, p. 40.

A steep sandy hill in this township, is still called the *Butter-hill*; a tradition exists that the country people from Wirral deposited their butter and other farming productions there, during the great plague at Chester, as they were afraid of approaching nearer to that city.

## LITTLE MOLLINGTON.

## IN THE PARISH OF ST. MARY, CHESTER.

The township of Little Mollington, or Mollington Banastre, although generally considered as part of the parish of Backford, is included in that of St. Mary on the Hill, at Chester. It was formerly part of the estates of Robert de Rodelent, and is mentioned as such in the Domesday Survey; after his death it reverted to the Earl, and was granted by Edward III. to Robert Banastre, of the county of Lancaster, who appears from an *Inq. p. m.*, 41 Edward III., to have held it by gift from the King, as a fourth part of a knight's fee, value £8. From the Banastres it passed to the Langtons, Barons of Newton, under whom it was held by the Houghtons, of Houghton Tower, one of whom was member in parliament for Lancashire, 9 Henry IV. By the marriage of the heiress of the Houghtons, with William Stanley, of Hooton, Esquire, 14 Henry VI., a portion of the township was conveyed to that family, in the possession of whose descendant, the present Baronet of Hooton, it still continues.

The other part is the property of the Rev. John Hamer, of Bangor, who married the sole heiress of a family of the name of Dobb, long seated at the ancient hall of Mollington Banastre, which they acquired with other considerable estates in the neighbourhood, by a marriage with the ancient family of Brownes, of Upton, in the reign of Charles I.

Little Mollington contains 223 acres, and is valued in the County Books at £457. It is situated on the Wirral side of the Chester and Ellesmere Canal, by which it is separated from the other townships in the same parish, and in 1841 had a population of 25 persons engaged in agriculture.



## The Parish of Bebington.

The parish of Bebington comprehends the five townships of Great or Lower Bebington, Little or Higher Bebington, Poulton-cum-spittle, Storeton and Tranmere. It extends over nearly five thousand acres of land, and its population which in 1801 was 1026, by the last census amounted to 4941. At the former period the returns shewed a vast majority dependant upon agricultural pursuits; but they now include many of the gentry, merchants, and principal traders of Liverpool, who have fixed their residence on the banks of the Mersey, and other parts of this extensive and improving parish.

The manor of Great Bebington, in which township the church is situated, was given in the reign of Richard Cœur de Lion, by Hugh de Boidelle of Dodleston, great grandson of Osbernus Filius Tezzonis, whose name occurs in Doomsday, as then holding Poulton, to Robert de Lancelyn. From existing documents, it is certain the family of the Lancelyns had property in this neighbourhood, immediately after the conquest, and they continued to hold the manor of Bebington, in uninterrupted descent, until the reign of Henry VIII. It was then, upon the death of William de Lancelyn, conveyed by the marriage of his daughter, and heiress, to Randal Greene, (a descendant of the family of the Greenes, of Greenes Norton, in Northamptonshire) by whom conjointly with his wife, fines were levied, 11 Elizabeth, on their manors of Nether Bebington, Poulton-Lancelyn, Spittal, and Little Meolse. On the death of the last heir male of this family in 1756, it became the property of Priscilla, the wife of John Parnell, Esq., a solicitor of Chester, who thereupon changed his name to Green. Having no surviving issue, the manor reverted to the nearest direct descendant of the Greenes, Richard Kent, Esq., an eminent merchant of Liverpool, upon whose death in 1790, it became the property of his son, Joseph Kent, who soon afterwards, in compliance with the injunctions of the will of Mrs. Parnell, assumed the name of Green. He was succeeded by his nephew, Richard Green, Esquire, of Poulton Hall, who holds a Court-leet and Court-baron, for the manor of Lower Bebington, with that for his own township of Poulton Lancelyn, every three years.

Although Bebington is not mentioned in the Domesday Book, there can be no doubt of its having been included there, under the designation of Pontone (*Poultton*); as it is, in fact, identified, not only by the grant from the descendant of Osbernus, who is described as holding it at the time of the Survey, but by the circumstance of there being then a priest at the latter *vill*, where it is known no mother-church ever existed. About a century afterwards, in 1193, the advowson of Bebington was given by Seward de Lancelyn, to the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh, at Chester, and subsequently, in the reigns of Henry III. and Edward I., it was confirmed to them by Robert, and by William de Lancelyn. It remained in possession of the monastery until the dissolution, when it was conferred on the Dean and Chapter of the newly formed Diocese. Having been obtained from them by the rapacious Sir Richard Cotton, after some litigation and passing through the hands of several parties, it became the property of the Stanleys of Hooton, and by a marriage about the middle of the seventeenth century, it was conveyed to a branch of the Pooles of Poole.

The Rev. Hugh Poole, Rector of Bebington, who died in 1716, had two children, a son and a daughter; upon the death of the former in 1760, without issue, the advowson became the property of his sister, who married the Rev. Roger Jacson, from whom it was purchased, by the father of the present impropriator and rector, the Rev. Robert Mosley Fielden, M.A., who was instituted in 1826. The living is a rectory, standing in the King's books, at £30 13s. 4d., and by the Clergy List for 1841, of the annual value of £670.

The Church, formerly called Whitchurch,\* is situated on a pleasing elevation, in the centre of a very large yard, some little distance from the village. The external appearance of the edifice is very imposing. It is dedicated to St. Andrew, and contained, originally, a nave, chancel, and side aisle, divided from it on the south side by a range of Saxon arches, resting on massive cylindrical columns. The western part

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\* Whitchurch or White Church was, according to the authority of the Venerable Bede, as quoted by Dr. Whittaker in his history of Whaley, the usual name given by the Saxons to the new buildings of stone, which were substituted for the wooden fabrics of their predecessors. They would probably exist at an early period in Wirral, as the stone buildings and masonry of this neighbourhood are mentioned in the most ancient records. Stowe, in the survey of London, says, the stone walls of that city were first invented (q. *ERECTED*) by one Bennett, a monk of Wirral, at the commencement of the seventh century. If this be correct, the Romans must have been very tenacious in preserving the secret of masonry or our British ancestors exceedingly dull in acquiring the art, for not only had the Romans built the wall of Severus, but they had assisted the Britons to repair it, before they left them. As no monastery is known to have existed at that remote period in Wirral, Bennett was probably one of the fraternity of Bangor.



of the nave, yet, retains traces of its early Saxon architecture. The eastern part, and the chancel, exhibit the style of the latter part of the fourteenth century. The windows are very large and uniform; the side walls beneath them enriched with Gothic tracery; but much of the ancient building has been replaced by another chancel with side aisles, of large dimensions and extreme loftiness, finished in the splendid architectural style which distinguished the reign of Henry VII. It appears to have been the intention of the builder to make a grand central tower from the formation of the four western piers of the chancel, and by an arrangement in the roof of the side aisles, he has contrived to give to this part, internally, the effect of transepts. The design was interrupted before the vaulting was finished; but the parts erected have every appearance of having formed part of a regular plan, which if it had proceeded to completion would have presented one of the finest specimens of ecclesiastical architecture in Cheshire.—*Ormerod*, ii. 242.

The altar was placed under canopies between two large arches, ornamented with a shrine, and terminating with finials; but only that on the north side now remains.

There were formerly several windows of stained glass in this church, bearing the arms of the various families who had either resided in, or were benefactors to, the parish; but these are now all destroyed. Some of them, such as those of Stanley quartering Hooton, which was there in 1628, must have been of great antiquity, as

also those of the Minshulls, the Worralls, and the Chantrells; under one of the latter was incised, "*Orate pro bono statu Ricardi Chauntrell et Margaretæ uxoris ejus, qui hanc fenestram fieri fecerunt, A. D. 1523.*"

The several benefactions to the poor, are recorded on tablets in the parish church. In 1655, a charity school for the children of Great Bebington, and the demesnes of Poulton, was founded and endowed by the land-owners of the parish, with twenty acres of land out of a common then enclosing. The Lord of the manor and the Rector for the time being are the Governors, and they have the right of appointing the schoolmaster. In the 31st Report of the "Commissioners of Inquiries into Charities," dated 1837; the income is stated at £20—value of land occupied by the late master—and the school described as "supported by voluntary contributions, and payment of twopence a week by the children; master having no permanent income—number attending, about 140." A room attached to the east end of the church was used as this school; but in 1828, two large rooms for the purpose, and a house for the master were built by subscription, on land given by the late Sir Thomas Massey Stanley, Bart. The present number of scholars is 100 boys and 50 girls. Among other endowments for the poor, are several sums of money, for the express purpose of keeping up a stock of cows to be hired among them at a low annual rent.\*

The *New Ferry* distant from Bebington Church about a mile and a half, and from George's Dock Pier at Liverpool nearly three miles, though established for many years, has never had any Steam Boats attached to it, and is comparatively of little importance. Immediately opposite to it are several old men of war, which have been dismantled, and

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\* As this is a species of charity in a great measure confined to this part of the kingdom, and is altogether unknown in many counties, the following details may not be uninteresting. In 1655, one Henry Goodacre left £20 to purchase cows for the use of the poor of the parish, and in 1670 a further sum was left for the same purpose. The earliest accounts are lost; but from the year 1682, a regular statement has been kept. There were then 29 cows; in 1712, 2; in 1732, 26; in 1772, 16; which were gradually reduced to nine, the number in 1815. The hire at first fixed at four pence per year, was afterwards raised to 2s. 8d., at which it continued until 1797, when it was advanced to 3s. per year. The cows are lent to such persons only, as the rector and churchwardens may approve, on their finding security among their fellow parishioners, for the good usage of the cows, their production when required, and the payment of the yearly rent. Every encouragement is given to poor persons willing to advance any portion of the cost of a cow, which from the books appears to have been in 1692 about 60s; the purchases made in 1815 were at £9. The horns of the cows are branded with the initials of the rector and the churchwarden, and the parties to whom they are lent, are bound to produce them on the 25th April. The rents paid for their hire and a few small fines from the petty sessions, are the only sources of revenue, by which this excellent charity has been supported;—a charity which under the auspices of the present and late rectors, has been productive of much good to many poor labourers and widows, who have succeeded to the small farmers to whom the benefaction was originally confined.

are now used as lazarettoes, or floating warehouses, for the reception of goods arriving from Egypt, &c., liable to quarantine. Many relaxations in the quarantine laws have latterly taken place, and these vessels are now principally employed in airing rags and wool imported from the Levant, and cotton from Alexandria; of the latter about 50,000 bales annually arrive, which under the existing regulations require about thirty days exposure in the lazarettoes.

To the southward of the New Ferry, on a raised terrace is a number of elegant detached houses with gardens, pleasure grounds, &c., which until the last few years were only let in the summer months. The regularity of the Steam Packets from the Rock Ferry, has materially enhanced their value, and they are now eagerly sought for and inhabited during the whole year; and the entire township evidences increasing prosperity, several clusters of new houses being now building, each equal in extent to the old village, which is situated about three miles from Birkenhead, on the direct road to Chester. It contains a number of small houses, presenting nothing worthy of notice, except Bebington Hall, now the Rectory, an extensive building, commanding a superb prospect to the south and west.

The population of Great or Lower Bebington in 1801 was 264 persons, and by the return of 1841, the number was 1187. It contains 892 acres, and is valued in the County Books at £1762.

### HIGHER OR LITTLE BEBINGTON.

The townships of the two Bebingtons are so much united, their boundaries so ill defined, and their respective names so frequently confounded, and so generally misunderstood, that the description of the one is in a great measure that of the other, and more especially in reference to those parts which lay to the eastward of the Chester and Birkenhead Railway, by which both townships are intersected

The distinctive appellations have been frequently varied; but the terms now adopted by the magistracy, and acted upon in county affairs are LOWER, as applicable to the Great, the Superior, or Nether, Bebington, and HIGHER, is prefixed to that formerly in general, called Little Bebington. It will, however, be seen that the manors and estates have, from the earliest period, been held by different parties and upon very different tenures.

The manor of Little or Higher Bebington, which does not appear in Domesday

survey, was held for several generations by the Bebingtons, under the ancient family of the Worlestones, by the presentation of a rose on St. John's day. The elder branch of the Bebingtons became extinct in the male line during the reign of Richard II., a circumstance not very unlikely from the fatality attending the disastrous civil wars of that period, in which, it is well known, this family suffered severely.\* Their heiress Jane, daughter of John de Bebington, conveyed the manor by her marriage, to John Minshull, of Minshull, who appears from an *Inq. p. m.* to have died, seized of the same in 18 Edward IV. After continuing in this family for several generations, upon the marriage of their sole heiress to Thomas Cholmondeley, of Vale Royal, it became vested in him, and by his descendant Charles Cholmondeley, Esq., then M.P. for Cheshire, it was under the authority of an Act of Parliament in 1736, sold in various severalties. Among the principal purchasers were the immediate predecessors of Mr. White of Sutton, and Mr. Orred of Chester, both of whom appointed gamekeepers, and claimed the exercise of manorial rights; privileges however which the many subsequent subdivisions of property in the townships have rendered of little value.

Higher Bebington appears to be one of the most improving townships in the Hundred, and must continue to increase in prosperity as the neighbouring districts become more densely populated; for unquestionably the docks and other works now constructing at Birkenhead, will induce many respectable parties who would otherwise have selected that town as a retreat from the busy haunts of commerce, to retire to a situation of comparatively greater seclusion.

In proceeding from the parish church towards the Mersey, the waters of which wash the eastern shore of both Bebingtons, at the distance of half a mile the road is crossed by the Chester and Birkenhead Railway, where the Directors have established a Station, at a point distant from Chester about thirteen miles, and from Birkenhead two miles. Various new buildings, many of them of a superior description, now present themselves and others are in course of erection. Few places more clearly show the advantages that result from a frequent and regular intercourse, with a large community than these two townships. Their population in 1801 was 406, in the next twenty years it had only increased 126 (to 532); the augmentation of the next ten years was

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\* A younger branch of this family, which had previously settled at Nantwich, acquired some celebrity from the fact that at the battle of Flodden Field, one of them, Richard de Bebington, had six sons,—William, Randle, James, Charles, — and John, together with their uncle, Randle de Bebington, by whom they were led,—slain in that sanguinary contest.



only 181, the total number of inhabitants in 1831 being 713. About this time Steam Packets were first established between the Rock Ferry and Liverpool, and the census of 1841, exhibits a return of 1986 persons. From the New Ferry to the Rock Ferry, a splendid esplanade extends along the margin of the river for about half a mile, leading to the Royal Rock Hotel, an excellent establishment, which commands a more varied, extensive, and interesting prospect than is obtained from any other station on the river.

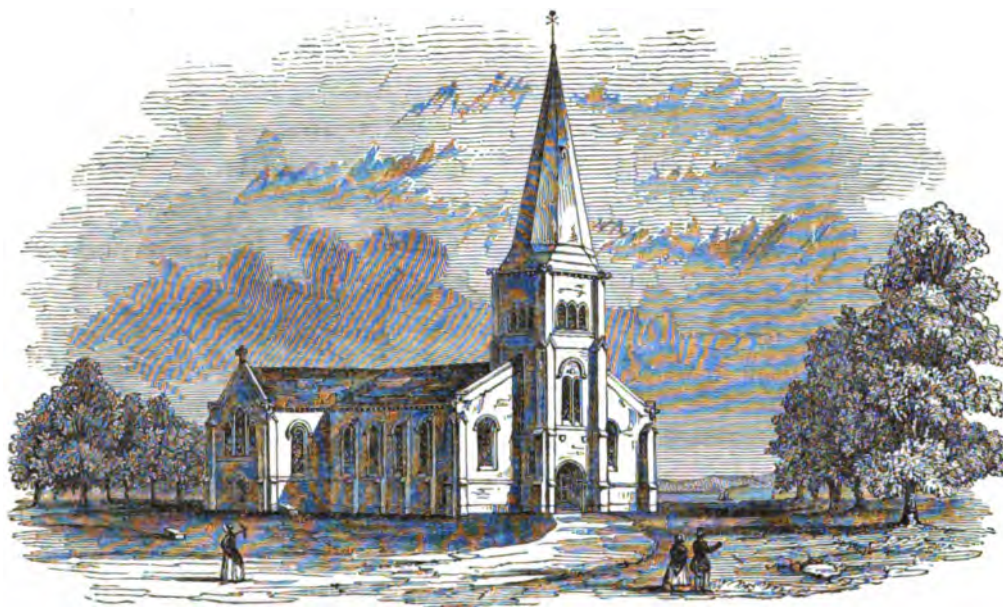
It is now about nineteen years since a large tract of land in this neighbourhood was purchased together with the right of Ferry, by a gentleman of Liverpool. By him the Ferry was much improved, a large and excellent pier built, roads were made, and every facility afforded to persons inclined to purchase his land in building lots. For years little occurred to reward the spirited adventurer in bringing the estate into beneficial operation. At length the Ferry, with a part of the land was bought by some parties in 1836, and at that eventful period, a few days were required at Liverpool to form it into a joint stock company.\* By the new company, the Hotel was enlarged to its present extent, additional pleasure grounds added, and the whole united to the Ferry. Larger and more commodious steam packets were procured, and material alterations made in their management. Several members of the Company purchased lands on the margin of the river, and with others they were formed into a Park, planted, and laid out in a picturesque manner. No part of the shores of the Mersey has undergone a more rapid or pleasing transformation, and the park and its vicinity will, doubtless, be soon covered with those ornamental villas, that appear rising up in every direction in this delightful neighbourhood. About the centre of the township, a large tract of land together with Derby House, the ancient seat of the Minshulls, having been purchased by Richard Watson Barton, of Manchester, Esquire, about ten years since, was made the site of very considerable improvements; the grounds which were previously in a very neglected state, were drained, planted, and laid out for detached houses. The old Hall was entirely renovated, and now presents a very respectable mansion of the Elizabethian style, while a huge barn nearly opposite to it has been fitted up in a corresponding manner and was used as a temporary church until the erection of a new fabric. In November, 1844, Derby House and about one hundred acres of land were purchased.

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\* Shares in the "Rock Ferry Company" were issued at £30 each, and so great were the anticipated advantages, that they were freely sold at a premium of £7 to £8 per share. They are now only worth £4 to £5 each; a price that does not seem commensurate with the apparent value of their property.

from Mr. Barton by John Edwards, of Chester, Esq., who has already made arrangements for some extensive buildings in the ensuing spring.

Of course many large tracts of land in the upper parts of these townships are yet only in a state of cultivation, and even near the river there are but few streets laid out. There are, however, several excellent turnpike roads which in a great measure supply this deficiency, and at several points, entirely new settlements have been formed, which in the number of their inhabitants, far exceed the old village.\* The principal of these are near to the Rock Ferry, and at Rock Park, all the buildings in which are of a superior description, standing either alone, or in detached clusters of not more than three or four, in gardens, which comport with the general appearance of the Park, through which are several pleasing and sheltered drives. At the north-eastern extremity of these grounds on a gentle acclivity overlooking the park, stands a new church, dedicated to St. Peter on the Rock.



The foundation stone of this remarkably neat church was laid in April, 1841. It

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\* The houses in the village of Bebington are in general very insignificant. The owner of one, however, seems resolved to attract attention; he has mounted several pieces of mock ordnance on a turret or bastion, directly commanding the approach from Birkenhead, and guarded them with a variety of military figures; the front entrance to his house is even more formidably

is in the Norman style of architecture from designs by Hurst and Moffat, of Doncaster, and was completed by Messrs. John and William Walker, of Birkenhead, with the red stone with which this township abounds, in the following summer, at a cost of about three thousand pounds, raised by subscription, exclusive of the land, which was given by Mr. Barton. It contains sittings for about eight hundred persons, and was opened for Divine Service on 8th of September, 1842, by the Rev. the Chancellor Raikes; the present Incumbent is the Rev. Thomas Fisher Redhead.

The river from this part assumes the appearance of an inland lake, the outlet being entirely concealed by the projecting land of Birkenhead. "To the northward is a pleasing view of Holt-hill, Tranmere town, and a number of scattered cottages and mansions on the side of the hill, with Wallasey church and mill further in the distance on the rising ground. The most prominent object in the view, and which is seen from this spot with peculiar advantage, is the southern end of the rapidly increasing town of Birkenhead. The church, houses, and hotel appear flanked with rich woodland scenery, whilst the river, which by the natural formation of the shore at Tranmere presents an extensive sheet of water, contrasts beautifully with the scenery of the surrounding country." "Beyond the Birkenhead slip, a glimpse is obtained of the Lancashire shore, as far as Waterloo, including Crosby, Litherland, Linacre, Bootle, &c., and the entire range of the town, from the new north dock works to Toxteth Park. The docks, vessels, churches, warehouses, &c., are very prominent objects, and beyond the apparently confused mass is perceived the village of Everton; the church, and a number of the handsome mansions erected in that neighbourhood, are easily distinguished. To the southward is the rising ground called High Park, on which are situate numerous houses, a church built upon a most commanding situation, windmills, &c.; and the

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protected by a quantity of stuffed reptiles, which appear ready to spring from their haunts in his garden, as the unwary passenger approaches. In the walls are inserted several, apparently, ancient tombstones, on one of which is the following curious epitaph :—M. S. M : em : OR . yoF . KathA . ri Neg . Rayc Hang'd . FRO? mah. VSyli . Fetol . if . Ele SScl ayb . yea . RThan . Dcl . Ays . Hego Therp Elfa . Nd . No . Ws . He . stur . N'D . Toe ART . HH . Ersel . Fy EWEE . Pin Gfr . I Ends .. Letmea Dviseab . Ateyo Vgr . I E . Fand Dryy . Ourey Es. Which, when reduced by proper punctuation, to legible English, reads as follows :—

Sacred to the memory of Katharine Gray,  
 Chang'd from a busy life to lifeless clay.  
 By earth and clay she got her pelf,  
 And now she's turned to earth herself.  
 Ye weeping friends, let me advise—  
 Abate your grief and dry your eyes.

projecting land below this place forms the western end of a sweet romantic dell, well known by the name of the Dingle, a favourite pleasure resort of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, who have liberty of access to it under certain restrictions, by the permission of the public-spirited proprietors, the Messrs. Yates, by whom the grounds are kept in a good state of cultivation. The upper part of the tower of the church of St. Michael, Toxteth-park, appears peeping through the rich foliage of the trees rising from the Dingle. To the southward are the various villas of Mosley-hill and Aigburth, and the beautiful and picturesque scenery on the margin of the river from these places to Garston and Hale Point, where, the river turning to the left, a further view of the shore is intercepted." *KAYE'S STRANGER IN LIVERPOOL, by far the best guide for any visitor to that important town.*

Steam Boats are in regular attendance every half hour, to and from Liverpool; the distance between George's Pier, the usual place of landing there, and the Rock Ferry being two miles and a quarter.

## POULTON-CUM-SPITTLE.

The township of Poulton, anciently *Pontone*, is situated 13 miles from Chester, and about four from Birkenhead. It contains 865 acres, and is rated in the County Books at £917 per annum. The population by the late returns was 155, all dependent on agricultural pursuits, except the inhabitants of Poulton Hall.

The family of the Lancelyns, who were settled in this township soon after the Conquest, held it under a charter from the Boideles, of Dodleston, by which they were bound to a small annual payment, and the services of four men every third year, to assist in keeping their castle of Dodleston, near Chester, in repair. The manor passed to the Greens by the same title as that of Bebington, and the Hall, a spacious modern building of white stone, is now the residence of Richard Green, Esq., the representative of that family and the sole owner of Poulton-Lancelyn, with the exception of a small farm belonging to Mr. Vyner, of Lincolnshire.

Several monumental records of the Greens are to be found in Bebington church, two of them are singularly comprehensive. Upon the drapery of an elegant mural cenotaph of black marble, on the north side of the church, are these words inscribed:

"Priscilla, eldest daughter and heiress of Edward Green, Esq., widow of John Parnell, Esq., of Chester, died December 18, 1792, aged 86. Ursula Green, Spinster, died December,

1791, aged 84. Edward Parnell, Esq., son of John and Priscilla, died unmarried, August, 1776, aged 39. Elizabeth Green, Spinster, died May, 1751, aged 41. Within these rails their remains are deposited, with those of numerous ancestors, resident at Poulton-Lancelyn, in this parish, for more than seven centuries, and Lords also of this manor. THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL BE HAD IN EVERLASTING REMEMBRANCE..”

On a mural monument, at the east end of the north aisle:

“Near this are interred, in the hopes of a blessed resurrection, through Jesus Christ our Lord, the bodys of the Greens of Poolton Lancelyn, Esqrs., viz.:—Edward, 1631, Randle, 1639, Henry, 1653, Richard, January 1677, his wife, daughter of Sir Thomas Bunbury, Bart. May, 1678, Edward, 1694, John, 1711, Priscilla, his wife, December, 1742. The Rev. Thomas Green, January 17, 1746. Thomas Green, A.M. Rr. of Woodchurch, erected this 1742.”

Some traces of the ancient castle of the Lancelyns may yet be found in the remains of earth work, in the fields, still bearing the Saxon appellation of *Marford*, from *ford*, or passage over the *great* pool formed by the Mersey at high tides, previously to the receding of that river from this shore. The effects of the waters are still visible on the waveworn face of the rocks even at the upper end of the valley, near which was the ancient Hall or Castle of the Lancelyns, which standing on a high knoll, overhanging a deep vale in front, and flanked by the two ravines, was remarkably strong. The views from the present mansion, which is situate on a gentle eminence above the most romantic part of the valley and sheltered with good timber, are bold and extensive, commanding the entire range of the Welsh coast.

It appears from several ancient records that in and previously to the reign of Henry III., there was a chapel in Bebington dedicated to St. Thomas the martyr, (i. e. *Thomas a Becket*,) which must have been founded shortly after his death, as his successor Richard, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1183, confirmed certain possessions, enumerating part of the wood and half of the fishery, to this chapel, saving the rights of the mother church. This chapel was most probably situated in Spittal and attached to the Hospital in that hamlet, of which William de Lancelyn was possessed at the time of his death, in 1332. This hospital is described in some legal documents, quoted in Bishop Tanner's *Notitia Monastica*, as being founded for lepers; and from a charter dated in 1260, it is found that Divine service was regularly performed there by the Almoner of Chester, and masses said for the souls of the Bishop of Coventry, and those of the Earls, Abbots and Monks of Chester, for which services the Almoner was rewarded with all the revenues of the church at Ince, excepting twenty shillings, which were payable annually into the exchequer of the monastery at Chester. No trace or tradition of

either chapel or hospital now exists, except in a detached hamlet of the township that bears the name of Spittle, and the almost invariable addition of the name of that hamlet,—Spittle or Spittal, an evident abbreviation of Hospital,—to Poulton in all legal writings.\*

Situated in the southeastern part of the township, at the back of a deep and richly wooded dingle, Spittal presents a scene of sequestered beauty, totally different from any other in this part of the country. The united streams of two vallies,—one of which sweeps nearly round the parish, until under Poulton Hall, it forms a junction with the other, which commences near the Suttons,—divide the parishes of Bromborough and Bebington; and at Bromborough Bridge they form a deep creek, which is navigable to the Mersey, and much frequented by lighters, employed in carrying stone from the extensive quarries at Storeton. On this water was the fishery, so frequently the subject of legal transfer at an early period; and in the 1st Edward IV., the right to its streams was also contested by the Abbot of St. Werburgh and Richard de Lancaster, for their respective millers at Bebington and Bromborough, and left to the arbitration of Ralph Bold and John Massey. *See Harl. MSS. 2022.*

When Poulton passed to the heirs male of the house of Green, pursuant to the will of Mrs. Parnell, the hamlet of Spittle was settled on the sisters of the Mr. Kent, who

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\* The origin of this family has been the subject of frequent disquisitions among the learned, and in some curious places: When the late Lord Byron, in the 5th Canto of his *FRANCESCA DA RIMINI*, wrote

Noi leggevamo un giorno per diletto  
Di Lancillotto, come Amor lo strinse:  
Soli cravamo, e senza alcun sospetto.

The following note was appended to the word Lancillotto:—

“ One of the Knights of Arthur's Round Table, and the lover of Geneva, celebrated in romance. *See Southey's King Arthur*, i. 52. Whitaker, the historian of Manchester, makes out for the knight both ‘a local habitation and a name.’ ‘The name of Lancelot,’ he says ‘is an appellative truly British and significative of royalty; lance being a *celtic* word for a spear, and leod, lod or lot importing a people. He was *therefore* a *British Sovereign*, and since he is denominated Lancelot of the lake, *perhaps* he resided at Coccium, in the region Linuis, and was monarch of Lancashire; as the kings of the Creones, living at Selma, in the forest of Morven, are generally denominated sovereigns of Morven; or more probably, was king of Cheshire, and resided at Pool-ton Lancelot, in the Hundred of Wirrall.—Whit. Manchester, ii. p. 51.”

Never was a greater burlesque upon the origin of names or families attempted, or a conjecture advanced which can be more easily confuted. The *Pontons* of Doomsday received its distinguishing appellation, for there were two other townships of the name in the same neighbourhood, from no fabulous Sir Lancelot, but from the ancient family of the Lancelyns, who are proved by existing documents to have been settled there, bearing that name shortly after the conquest, since which period their descendants have continued in possession. It is difficult to conceive how Whitaker, usually so critically exact, should have fallen into the error, of confounding a family so well established, with the fabulous hero of Sir Thomas Malory's “most famous history of the Renowned PRINCE ARTHUR and his valiant Knights of THE ROUND TABLE.”

took the name of Green, as already mentioned. The elder of these was Elizabeth, widow of the Lord Henry Murray, fourth son of the third Duke of Athol. In October, 1844, her executors sold the property to William Jackson, of Birkenhead, Esq., and considerable improvements are now making in the Spittle Estates. If the activity which that gentleman has evinced in promoting the welfare of Birkenhead and Claughton be extended to this hamlet a vast alteration will soon be apparent.

### STORETON.

The manors and villages of Great and Little Storeton are comprehended in the township of Storeton which contains 1127 acres, and is rated in the County Books at £1208. The population which in 1801 was 180, then occupying 34 houses, was by the late census returned at 240, and all with the exception of those employed at the Stone Quarries of Sir William Massey Stanley, engaged in agricultural pursuits.

Storeton is mentioned in the Domesday Book as being then held by Nigellus de Burceio, a retainer of the all-potent Nigel, baron of Halton, to whom reference has already been made, (See 62.) It had previously belonged to one Dunning, an Anglo-Saxon; of whom history has left no trace, except in the records of *Domesday*, where his name frequently occurs, as having been the owner of properties then conferred upon the victorious followers of the Norman earl; and once, as affording the solitary instance, in this neighbourhood at least, of being permitted to retain an estate in one of his townships, that of Kingsley, in the Hundred of Edisbury.

From some circumstances now unknown, Storeton soon afterwards reverted to the earldom; and it is not again noticed until about the year 1120, when it was presented, together with Puddington and the bailiwick of the Forest of Wirral, by Randal de Meschines, Earl of Chester, to his steward, Alan Sylvester, or Savage, whom in the deed of gift he describes as *meo homini et ministro*. Ralph Sylvester, the son of Alan, had two children, one a son that died at an early age, and a daughter who, having succeeded to his estates, conveyed them in marriage to one Alexander, who is presumed to have been tutor to the son of Earl Randal, though in some pedigrees he is called the Steward of the Household.\* He then assumed the name of Storeton, and the estate together with

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\* See the Stanley plea, exemplified 10 Richard II., in the Grosvenor MSS. xxi. 5. although it does not exactly accord with the following short charter of the Earl Hugh, referred to above. "Hugo comes Cestrie constabulario suo, dapifero suo, et universis baronibus suis, et omnibus hominibus sui, salutem. Noveritis me dedisse Alexandro magistro filii mei,

the wardenship of the Forest of Wirral was especially granted, or rather confirmed to him, by Hugh Cyveliock, Earl of Chester. Alexander afterwards stiled himself *Magister*, and his signature as *Mag'tro Alexandro*, frequently appears in numerous deeds immediately after that of the sheriff of the county, and before those of the officers of the Palatinate Earldom. He had two daughters, one of whom dying without children,\* the manor was conveyed in 1315 by the marriage of the other, Agnes, to Sir Thomas de Bamville, who had two sons; Sir Philip, the elder and heir having no son, the estates were divided between his three daughters, and upon the marriage of Jane or Joan the eldest with Sir William Stanley, the first of that name in Wirral, he obtained the bailiwick of the forest, and one third of the manor of Storeton. The other portion of the manor and township were subsequently purchased by Sir William Stanley, who thereupon assumed the armorial bearings of the Foresters, viz.:—*Argent, on a bend azure, three bucks' heads cabossed, or*, instead of those previously borne by the Stanleys. His great-grandson Sir William, Lord de Stanley of Great Storeton, who died in the 21st Richard II., leaving three sons and one daughter, appears from a post mortem inquisition to have held all Storeton, then valued at £40 per year, from the King as Prince of Chester in *capite* by military service. He was the immediate ancestor of the many noble and distinguished Stanleys, that have occupied so conspicuous a situation in the records of Britain during the last four centuries. His eldest son married Margaret, daughter and heiress of William de Hoton, from whom is descended the present Sir William Massey Stanley, Bart., of Hooton Hall; and his second son, Sir John Stanley, Lord Deputy of Ireland, was created a Knight of the Garter, and marrying Isabella, the heiress of Lathom, became the founder of the families of the Earl of Derby, the Lord Stanley of Alderley, the Bishop of Norwich, and the Stanleys of Ponsonby, Cumberland.

Storeton Hall was a large baronial mansion; a few remains of which may yet be

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Annabellam filiam filii Alani Salvagii, cum tota sua hereditate, videlicet, Storeton et Podington et omnibus eorum pertinentiis, tenendâ in feodo et hereditate, libere et quiete de me et heredibus meis, sicut Carta patris mei testatur. Testibus Bertramo de Verdon. Johanne Constabulario."

\* She was, however, married to Sir Richard, a Norman knight, lord of Kingsley, with which he was presented by Randal de Meschines, together with the Master-Forestship of Mara and Mondrem Forests; districts so extensive, that notwithstanding several alienations, when, by the 52 George III., they were formed into the parish of Delamere, they were found to contain 7755 acres. It is singular that these two townships, Storeton and Kingsley, which thus formed part of the emoluments of the Master Foresters of Wirral and Delamere, should originally have belonged to the unfortunate Saxon Dunning, upon whose death, Kingsley most probably was again seized by the earl.



traced in the outbuildings attached to the Hall, or rather manor-house, which is now occupied by a farmer. Some doorways and a fronted window, in a part which projects at right angles from the building, would indicate the ruins of a chapel. The Court-leet and Court-baron is still held for the manor by Sir William M. Stanley, to whom the entire township belongs. A range of hills crosses this township containing vast beds of the finest freestone, which afford employment to the many labourers who occupy the straggling huts and small houses of which both villages are composed. A rather singular geological discovery was made in these quarries in the month of June, 1838: from a depth of about thirty feet a large slab of stone was raised, on which were the impressions of the feet of an animal, supposed to have been of the Opossum or Kangaroo tribe. The imprints of the hind feet were nine inches in length by four in breadth; the fore feet were four inches in length, and about the same in breadth. Professor Kaup has provisionally assigned to it the name of *Chirotherium*, from the distant resemblance, both of the fore and hind feet, to the impression of a human hand. The slab, bearing these impressions, has been deposited by Mr. John Tomkinson, of Liverpool, in the British Museum; and for a more particular description of these antediluvian remains, the reader is referred to Professor Buckland's *Bridgewater Treatise on Geology*; at the conclusion of the twelfth section of that interesting work, *vol. i. p. 264*. The footsteps of five or six small reptiles have also been discovered in several consecutive beds in these quarries.

The quarries are very extensive, and the stone has acquired a well deserved celebrity; not only are many of the edifices of Birkenhead and the neighbouring country built with it, but it is absolutely exported in considerable quantities; and at present there are two mansions building with stone from Storeton, at a great distance, one near Colchester, and another in Ireland.

To the westward of the range of hills in which are the beds of stone, is a level plain of considerable extent, partly in this and partly in the adjacent township, but all on the property of Sir William M. Stanley; this has been used as a race course during the last two seasons, and from the rank and character of the distinguished visitors by which these races have been attended, they are expected to continue objects of leading attraction.

## TRANMERE.

The township of Tranmere contains 1043 acres, valued for County purposes at £4456; and by the late census, was returned as having 2550 inhabitants, a number that has since considerably increased.

The earliest mention of Tranmere that occurs in any known record, is in a document attested before Jacobi de Audeley, as Chief Justice of Chester, in the fiftieth year of the reign of Henry III., and, consequently, in the year 1266 or 1267, when that personage held the office of justiciary. At that period, Bernard de Tranmoll was lord of Tranmere, then bearing the name of its local lord. The manor continued in possession of the Tranmolls, until the reign of Richard II.; when, upon the death of Richard of Tranmere without male issue, it was divided between his two daughters. By the marriage of the elder, a moiety of this manor was conveyed to John de Bebington; which, with that of Little Bebington, afterwards descended to the Minshulls of Minshull, and ultimately to their representatives, the Cholmondeleys of Vale Royal; by whom, as has already been noticed, their Wirral estates were sold in the last century.

The remaining moiety was conveyed, by the marriage of the other coheiress, to Robert Holme of Tranmere; the eighth in descent from whom, William Holme, sold the same, in various allotments, in the early part of the reign of James I.; thus terminating the connection of this family with Tranmere, which had continued for two centuries.\*

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\* But it would be unpardonable thus to pass over the distinguished collectors of the Cheshire Papers, now in the British Museum, and which constitute so large a portion of the oft-quoted Harleian Manuscripts.

Randle, the first of the five of the name, was the son of one Thomas Holme, a stationer in Bridge Street, Chester; who appears to have been, in 1592, a member of the United Company of Stationers, Painters, Glaziers, and Embroiderers, in that City. Upon the books of this Company, his son Randle was entered on the 3rd June, 1598; but the exact period of his birth is unknown, from that event having occurred before the commencement of the parish register.

This first RANDLE, who was deputy to the College of Arms for Cheshire, Shropshire, and North Wales, was fined ten pounds for not attending at the coronation of Charles I. to receive the honour of knighthood. In several instances, he appears to have been dilatory in the services due to his superiors; and he has himself given a curious account of an interview which he had, when mayor of Chester, with the Earl of Arundel, then Earl Marshal; who visiting Chester, and not finding the Deputy Herald in waiting to receive him, sent a messenger with a warrant to enforce his attendance. The Mayor came bearing the insignia of his office, when the indignant earl exclaimed, "*Mr. Maior, I sent for you for to tell you your offence you have committed, in not giving your attendance as you ought, and now do you come with your authority? And with that, suddenly took he the staffe out of Mr. Maior's hands, and laid itt in the window, saying, I will teach you to knowe yourselfe, and attend peers of the realme; though I care not for your observances, yet because you want manners, I shall teach you some, and you shall further heare from me. I would have you to knowe, I have power to commit you, to teach you to knowe yourselfe and me, and to give better attendance.*" After being further severely reprimanded by the Earl, notwithstanding his many excuses, he was

One of the sales then made, is noticed in the following *Inq.* 10, *tem.* 20. James I. "Henry Kent, gent., died seized of I messuage, V cottages, L acres of land, XX of meadow, and XXX of pasture, in Tranmore, late the inheritance of William Holme,

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mulcted in a variety of fees to the marshal's officers. (*Harl. MSS.* 2057-9.) He was buried on the 30th January, 1654, in the parish church of St. Mary at Chester, where a handsome monument, erected to his memory, still remains.

The second RANDLE, who was sheriff to his father when mayor, and served that office in 1643-44, a year memorable in the annals of that city, as that in which the siege commenced. He was associated in a commission dated at Oxford, 1 January, 19 Charles I., with Sir Orlando Bridgeman, Sir Robert Brerewood, his father Randle, and others, directing the seizure of the effects of all absent rebels, and such of their adherents residing within the city or a circuit of five miles, as were, or had been, in actual rebellion against that monarch. It may be readily conceived, that when the Parliamentary forces two years afterwards, obtained possession of Chester, they would be revenged to the uttermost, upon all who acted under the authority of this Commission; and to this may be attributed the distress, and, ultimately, the ruin of the Holmes, who appear to have taken an active part in enforcing the wishes of the king. This Randle was also associated with his father in the office of Deputy Norroy King-at-Arms; for which he himself furnished a proof that he was little qualified, by the draft of a letter in his handwriting, (*Harl. MSS.* 2094, 18.) to Sir George Booth. From this it appears, he was suffered to hold office and pursue business, during the interregnum; for two years of which, he was occupied in making collections for a genealogical account of the family of Sir George Booth. He writes to Sir George, that from these collections, he could prove his descent from above three hundred great families, but that having no learning, he was unable to digest his notes, and therefore begged his money and discharge. Yet, though so unsuitable to the office, he was extremely tenacious of the privileges it conferred; and most jealous of any unlicensed interference with its duties. A letter to Sir Gilbert Houghton, Bart. is yet extant, among many others of a similar nature, requiring from him the transmission of the funeral certificate of his father, with £6 13s. 4d. his fee for recording it; and threatening him with the consequences of a suit in the Earl Marshal's court, should he not immediately comply with the demand: see the *Harl. MSS.*, No. 2011, p. 5; and also on page 9, where a similar application is made to Mrs. Mainwaring, for her husband's certificate, and his fee of £3 6s. 8d. Several complaints are also made of one Dutton, whom he threatens with proceedings, for having emblazoned some escutcheons without authority.

He died in September, 1659, and was succeeded by his son, the third RANDLE, who, in compensation for the many losses his family had sustained, was appointed to the office of Sewer of the Chamber in Extraordinary to Charles II. He followed the employments of his father and grandfather, those of herald painting, and professionally compiling genealogies; and was also Deputy Garter-at-Arms for the counties of Chester, Lancaster, and Salop, as also for North Wales. Previously to this appointment, his irregularities had attracted the notice of Sir William Dugdale, and he was indicted at Stafford, for illegally marshaling the funeral of Sir Ralph Ashton, and fined £20. This Randle was the author of that most singular work, which, he truly observed, is *to be understood by few*, entitled "*The Atradump of Armoury, or a Storehouse of Armoury and Blazonry*"; containing the several kinds of created beings, and how borne in coats of arms, both foreign and domestic; with the instruments used in all trades and sciences, together with their terms of art; also the etymologies, definitions, and historical observations on the same explicated and explained, according to our modern language. '*Every man shall camp by his standard, and under the ensigne of his father's house.*'—Numbers ii. 2. By RANDLE HOLME, of the city of Chester, gent., Sewer in Extraordinary to His late Majesty, King Charles II., and some time Deputy to the King of Arms. CHESTER, printed for the author, 1688." This book is remarkable, not only for its contents, but as being the first ever printed in Chester. Its preface, or rather "address to the reader," suggested to Dr. Johnson the idea of his preface to his Dictionary. The work is divided into four books, the first of which is similar to all old books on heraldry.

The second book, which treateth of *all essential and created beings, in whom there is either life or motion*, is divided into eighteen chapters; of which the first most blasphemously introduces, as an heraldic disquisition, a treatise on the proper

held of the manor of Halton, by the services of the ninth part of a knight's fee and suit of court to Halton, and paying II£ per annum to Thomas Powell, Esq. of Birken-

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*mode of blazoning God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; cherubims and seraphims; the distances of the heavens; the heathen gods and goddesses, demigods and country gods; the holy orders of angels, and the infernal order of devils; and the names the devil is called by.*" His object, Mr. Ormerod conceives to have been the formation of a kind of encyclopædia, in this awkward heraldic form. In the remaining part of this book, the author proceeds through all the range of creation; treating the reader with the strangest jumble on natural history, mineralogy, and surgery; occasionally diversified with palmistry, hunters' terms, cockpit laws, diseases, an essay on time, and on men's punishment in the infernal regions; introducing each subject, successively, with the fancied bearing of an armorial coat.

The first division of the "third booke" contains thirteen chapters; of which the first treats of dress, the second of coins, the third of gradations of rank; under this head are included all orders, from the "emperour, with the ceremonies of his coronation, and the fees of the officers of his court and household, to the butcher, with his terms for all pieces of meat cut in the shambles, either in or from beef, veal, mutton, pork, and brawn." The fourth chapter of this division contains the lives of our Saviour and his apostles; an account of the monastic orders; the trades of which the several catholic saints are patrons; the seven deadly sins, and the seven cardinal virtues; a description of the sybils, and of poverty. Then follows an account of the various kingdoms; of wrestling, merchandize, grammar, billiards, tennis; tools of bricklayers, ropers, upholsterers, and other trades, which are continued in several succeeding chapters. The tenth chapter treats, in an equally strange manner, of languages; the eleventh and twelfth of surgeons' instruments; and the thirteenth concludes a summary of architecture, which had been commenced in a preceding chapter.

This terminates the printed part of the work, to which he attaches a sort of prospectus of that which he had in manuscript. In conclusion he says, "thus far have I, with much cost and pains, caused to be printed for the public benefit; what remains, and is ready for the press, is as followeth in the succeeding contents; which, if encouraged by liberal and free contributors, may appear in the world; else will sleep in the bed of its conception, and never see the glorious light of the sun." His appeal was not successful; the world seemed satisfied with the contents of the ponderous volume of the *Academy*, which had already exceeded eleven hundred pages; and the unpublished materials now quietly repose on the shelves of the British Museum. And from the following specimen, taken at random, from his geographical description, this perhaps is not to be regretted:—

*"He beareth Or, a wild Irishman, or an Irish Tague, holding a half pike in his left hand, in bend sinister, the head downwards, all proper. The habit of these kind of wild people is to go bareheaded, their mantle about their shoulders, which they call a brackin; their shoes they call brogues; and hose and breeches, made both together, and close to the thighs, they call trouses. The place of their abode is called Ireland; it is scited under the 8 and 10 climates, the longest day being 16 hours in the south parts, and 17½ in the north parts. It is an island wholly environed with the salt sea. Some historians say, the soil, air, habits, and disposition, of the people, differ not much from the old Britanes, but more barbarous; being man-eaters and drinkers of the blood of them they slew in fights; neither were the women free from such savage customs. The modern Irish are somewhat better, by reason of their commerce with civil nations; but the wild Irish of the poorer sort are termed kernes."*

Randle continued to entertain sanguine expectations of the success of his appeal, and actually commenced the publication of the Fourth Book. Only one copy of the printed portion of this is known to exist. It is in her Majesty's library, at Windsor Castle.

At his death, in March, 1699, at the age of seventy-two, he was succeeded by his son, the fourth Randle, who was appointed Deputy to Norroy, King-at-Arms; and dying in 1707, was buried in St. Mary's Church at Chester, where a monument yet records his interment, after that of his five children, four daughters and one son, the fifth Randle, all of whom he survived.

The collections of the Holmes, the labour of upwards of a century, are of a very mixed nature; they consist partly of original deeds, copies of deeds, both civil and ecclesiastical, and partly of their own voluminous compilation. Dr. Gastrell

head Priory."\* Powell had some estates in the township of Tranmere, which he acquired by the grant of the temporalities of the dissolved priory of Birkenhead; these afterwards descended to Francis Richard Price, of Bryn-y-pys, Esq. who, previously to his selling the property, claimed the lordship of the manor, and gave a deputation to a gamekeeper. The late Daniel Orred of Chester, Esq., who disputed this right, also appointed a gamekeeper, contending that the manorial rights were vested in him, as the purchaser of much of the Cholmondeley property.

The estates that belonged to the moiety of the Holme's, with correspondent portions of manorial rights, becoming so much divided, the latter have been altogether disused; and, in fact, it was satisfactorily shewn in the legal proceedings, a few years since, in the case of *Pim v. Currel*, better known as the *Monks' Ferry*

the nineteenth bishop of this diocese, unable to induce the corporation of Chester to purchase them, was more fortunate with the Earl of Oxford; and they are now in the British Museum. Of their magnitude it may suffice to say, they occupy no less than *two hundred and fifty-seven volumes*, many of which are of the largest folio size, and the handwriting of most of them is unpleasantly close and small.

The following has just appeared in Herdman's *Ancient Liverpool*, part viii. p. 58., and nearly the same is found in Henshall's *Cheshire*, and other works on the County:

"I remember the son of the son of the third Randle Holme, (who was son to the second, who was mayor of Chester,) who was son to the old alderman named in the commission, and I think his name was Randle. He was tapster or chamberlain in the Golden Talbot Inn, in Liverpool, A. D. 1694; his poor father, the third Randle, then living. They were thus reduced by the Civil Wars. See the *Harl. MSS.*, cod. 2002, fol. 301."

This house was afterwards known as the Talbot Hotel, Water Street. There is, however, very little to warrant the statement. That the family were much reduced, cannot be doubted. In 1694, in which date all versions of this story agree, the third Randle was alive; the monument to his memory is thus inscribed, "Here lyes the body of Randle Holme, gent., Sewer in Extraordinary to King Charles II., and deputy to yr Kings-at-Arms, who died 12th March, 1699; and Randle, his son, deputy to Norroy King-at-Arms, who died 30th August, 1707. He married Margaret, daughter of Griffith Lloyd of Llanarmon, in the county of Denbigh, gent., by whom he had issue, Sarah, Eliza, Katherine, Randle, and Katherine, who died before their father, and lye here interred." From this it appears very improbable that it could have been either the third, fourth, or fifth Holme that was employed at the Inn. In Mr. Baines's elaborate *History of Lancashire*, vol. iv. page 81, after quoting from George Fox's *Journal*, p. 332:—"1669: We landed at Liverpool, and went to the mayor's house, it being an inn," he adds, "This must be a mistake. Lord Strange was mayor 1668-9, and Thomas Birteth, Esq., one of the grandees of the place, occupied the civic chair in 1669-70." And then, apparently to clear up the discrepancy, there follows, from the pen of Mr. Wanley, (a very respectable antiquary, who had before him the Commission previously referred to,) in the *Cat. MS., Bibl. Harl.*, vol. ii. p. 383:—"Possibly the family of the Holmes, mayors of Chester, having fallen into decay, might keep an inn at the time in Liverpool, as one of the family certainly did nearly thirty years afterwards."

In the absence of any evidence, beyond the uncertain remembrance of one, whose memory assigns three different situations to a person whose name is by no means singular in Cheshire or in Lancashire, the epitaph, expressly copied, Jan., 1845, by the writer of this, may be considered conclusive that the three Randles ended their days in Chester.

\* The family of Kents of Tranmere, terminated in the heiress marrying Edward Glegg of Grange, Esq., in 1704.

*case*, that no exclusive right of ferry at Tranmere, (the only privilege of importance attached to the manorial rights,) was ever claimed by any of the rival lords.

The old village of Tranmere, which is situated about a mile distant from the Mersey, stands on a rocky eminence, with stone from which most of the houses have been built. Many of these are superior to those of the neighbouring villages, and from the greater durability of the materials, exhibit marks of some antiquity.

The land rises rather abruptly from the Mersey, affording excellent sites for building, as the elevation commands an extensive prospect, uninterrupted by the low lands of Birkenhead.

At the Tranmere Ferry is a long pier, running into the river for nearly a quarter of a mile, parallel to the rocky shore of Birkenhead, and at a distance from it of about 300 yards. The usual parliamentary notices have been given for the inclosure of this space, and the construction therein of docks and other marine works. In the prospectus that has been issued, it is stated that, for the sum of £70,000, an area of eleven acres can be enclosed, and provided with gates to retain water. Should the scheme be carried into effect, it would make a great alteration in the lower part of this township; and the ferry, which has been abandoned for several years, would doubtless be revived. During the year 1844, some extensive building contracts were made in several parts of this township, which had for a long time lingered far behind its neighbouring town of Birkenhead. It now presents symptoms of improvements, to which the increased and increasing value of property in the vicinity will most probably give permanence.

In 1820 a church was erected, by private subscription, on land given for that purpose, near the old village, by the late Robert Hough, Esq., there being no place of worship nearer than Bebington. This is a neat building, vested in trustees, and capable of holding five hundred persons. The church is dedicated to St. Catherine and the Rev. William Cleminson, A.M., is the chaplain.

About the same time a chapel was built for the Wesleyan Methodists, and attached to it, is a school for one hundred children. The increase of this religious community caused the erection of another chapel in the autumn of 1844; and arrangements are now in progress for the construction of a larger and more commodious fabric.

The parochial school of this township being at Bebington, the poorer children of the Established Church are provided with the means of education, by subscription

among the more wealthy inhabitants; and a school-house has been built on the Holt, affording accommodation for sixty boys and fifty girls.

The most striking feature of Tranmere is Clifton Park, situated on the western side of the hill by which the township is intersected. Within the last few years this has been converted from a large plot of waste land into a favourite place of residence, and it is now studded with villas, generally of handsome and attractive elevations. The park, which is private property, has been laid out by Mr. Walter Scott, of Birkenhead, from whose designs most of the houses in it have been built. They exhibit a most studied diversity of character, the whole forming a splendid ornament to the neighbourhood.

The town is supplied with gas from the Birkenhead and Claughton Gas Company, who by the provisions of the act of parliament for their incorporation, have power to carry mains for the supply of Gas and Water to the greater part of the townships in the lower division of the hundred.

## Bidston Parish.



THE parish of Bidston contains the four townships of Bidston, Claughton, Moreton, and Saughall Massey, none of which are mentioned in *Doomsday*. It extends over 4381 acres, and is valued in the county books at £3832; having, by the late census, 1013 inhabitants.

The manor of Bidston township, and of the entire parish, was formerly part of the barony of Dunham Massey, and the estates are thus noticed by Sir Peter Leycester:—“This Hamon, the third Baron, gave unto John Massey his brother all the land of Moreton, which Matthew de Moreton held with Housebote and Haybote, in his demain-wood of Bidston, for the land of Podington, which Robert de Massey his uncle held, about *temp.* Henry II. or Richard I.” (240).

These townships continued in the possession of the Lords of Dunham for about a century and a half, when a sale made by Hamon the sixth Baron, being disputed by his co-heirs, the respective claimants were bought off by Henry, Duke of Lancaster, in the 9th Edward III. “And the Duke being possessed of the manor of Doneham, with its members, gave it to Roger de Strange, Lord of Knocking,” (*Leycester*, 242,) in exchange for lands in Lincolnshire. It continued in possession of this family until shortly after the death of “Roger le Strange of Knocking, chevalier,” who, by an *Inq. p. m.*, 21 Henry VI., died possessed “of the manors of Dunham Massey, and *inter alia* in demesne, as of fee the manors of Bydeston, Moreton, Saughall, from the King, *in capite* by military service, being of value XX£ per annum.” Almost immediately after this inquisition, the manors of Bidston passed to the family of the Stanleys, Earls of Derby. They continued to hold it until 1653, when the celebrated Charlotte de la Tremouille, Countess of Derby, and her son Charles, Earl of Derby, and the Lady Dorothea de Ruppa, his Countess, sold it to William Steele, Esq., “a counsellor-at-law,” by whom it was re-sold, in the reign of Charles II., to the Lord Kingston, a peer of Ireland. In



the latter part of that monarch's reign it was again sold to Sir Robert Vyner, Lord Mayor of London, and it still remains the property of a collateral branch, Robert Vyner, Esq., of Gauthby, in the county of Lincoln, who holds the Court-leet and Court-baron for the manor, at which the tenantry of the townships of Bidston, Moreton, and Saughall, do service.

The parish church of Bidston stands on a ledge of rock, considerably elevated above the neighbouring houses of the village. It is a very ancient fabric, consisting of a nave, chancel, aisles, and tower, on which are the armorial bearings of the house of Stanley. It formed part of the endowment of the neighbouring priory of Birkenhead, having a curate with an annual salary of £6 13s., and was valued at the dissolution at £13 6s. 4d. per annum. The impropriation and patronage were then given to the Bishop of Chester, who leases the rectory on lives, charging it with £20 per annum to the curate. The present lessee is Edmund Charles Keene, Oxford, Esq., who appoints the curate. The living is augmented by Queen Anne's Bounty, and, by the Clergy List of 1841, was then worth £98 per annum.

A free school was built by subscription, on a piece of waste land given for the purpose in 1636, by Lord Strange, his father, William, Earl of Derby, being then alive. The amounts collected exceeding the expenditure, the remainder was invested in land, which now produces £8 per annum. The parliamentary commissioners reported, in 1837, that "about twenty children attended—the master superannuated—and the school taught by deputy:" it is now, however, in a much more flourishing condition.

### BIDSTON.

The township of Bidston is situated three miles from the Birkenhead ferries, and eighteen from Chester. It contains 1777 acres of land, valued at £1751, and its population in 1841 consisted of 291 persons. The houses in the village are built of gray stone, and bear evident marks of antiquity; they are interspersed with trees, and the entire is superior to many of the neighbouring hamlets.

Bidston Hall stands on a commanding situation, on a rock of yellow freestone, of which material it is built. The western front has bay windows and projecting gables. The entrance is in the centre of this front, formed in a semicircular porch, which rises to the entire height of the building. The eastern side corresponds with the western, but has in addition a piazza along the lower story. The front approach is through a

square court, with a handsome gateway, having a singular arch highly ornamented with the cognizances of the Derby family, the whole presenting a most respectable appearance. It was built by William, sixth Earl of Derby, soon after he succeeded to the estates and titles of his brother Ferdinando, who is said to have fallen a victim to the imaginary power of witchcraft, but who was most probably poisoned. William, at the death of his brother, was abroad, and after his return to England had much difficulty in vindicating his claims to the estates, against the pretensions of the daughters of the deceased Earl. Having in consequence passed many years in a state of contention, foreign to his character and disposition, as soon as he arrived in England, and was firmly seated in his possessions he surrendered the cares and duties of property to his son, James, Lord Strange, and retired for the summer to Bidston, which the old Chroniclers say "he affected very much," (*see Appendix, p. 13*) and for the winters to Chester, in which city he died in 1642, being then Lord Lieutenant and Chamberlain of the county.

Here also lived, in economical retirement, Charles, the eighth Earl of Derby, during the embarrassments resulting from the part his father had taken against the Parliamentary forces. He was then in comparatively pecuniary distress; Latham Hall was a heap of ruins, and Knowsley in a condition little superior: half the estates of the family were either sold or sequestered: he possessed not one in Lancashire, Cheshire, Westmoreland, Cumberland, Warwickshire, York, or Wales, from which he could not see others of equal or greater value that had been lost by his father, for his devotion to the cause of his king, Charles I. And yet when a bill to effect the redemption of his estates had unanimously passed both houses of parliament, the royal assent was withheld by the son of that same king for whom the illustrious earl had ruined the fortunes of his family, and laid his own head upon the block.\*

Shortly after the restoration this estate, with other of the vast possessions of the Derby family, was sold, and in some intermediary purchase, it is said, Bidston Hall† was won and lost at cards, by the ace of clubs; to commemorate which a summer-house was built in the form of a club, as usually represented on that card; the founda-

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\* For the capture, trial, and execution of the Earl, see ante pp. 111-13.

† In this retreat, it has been alleged, the celebrated "Rye-house Plot" was concocted by some of the advisers of the Duke of Monmouth, who with the Duke, under pretence of partaking of the amusements of horse-racing at Leasowe Castle, spent some days in this neighbourhood, in 1683. This is, however, impossible, for the proceedings of the Rye House con-

tions of the building still remain in the picturesque grounds attached to the hall, which is occupied by Mr. Radley, an opulent and extensive farmer.

Bidston Lighthouse is an object very familiar to the inhabitants of Liverpool, and is one of the localities which command attention, as much from its prominent appearance as its mercantile utility. The Corporation of Liverpool having obtained an Act of Parliament, authorizing the purchase of Bidston Hill and the erection of a Lighthouse upon it, an edifice for that purpose was completed in 1771. It consists of a substantial stone building with an octagonal tower, which from a distance has the appearance of a church, and is frequently taken by strangers for one. A long range of poles were formerly placed on the ridge of the hill, on which signals were hoisted to announce to the merchants of Liverpool the approach of their shipping; but the establishment of a line of telegraphs, from that town along the coast of Wales to Holyhead, has nearly superseded the old mode of communication. But as the lights, from their elevated position, are visible for a circle of fourteen miles, and blending with those at Leasowe Lighthouse, point out the entrance into Liverpool, the continuance of the establishment is indispensable for the safety of the numerous shipping trading to that port.

The Lighthouse of Bidston is deserving a visit, and the stranger will be amply gratified, not only with its construction and appendages, but with the varied and extensive prospect which is obtained from a small gallery that projects round the upper story of the tower, at an elevation of three hundred feet above high-water mark. To

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spirators were revealed to the ministry in June, 1683; in the following month Lord William Russel, and many of the leaders were executed; while on the other hand, the records of the City of Chester incontestibly prove that Monmouth visited that city in August, 1683, when he was accompanied by the Earl of Macclesfield, Sir Gilbert Gerard, Sir Thomas Armstrong, better known from his duels and irregularities as Bully Tom Armstrong, and upwards of one hundred attendants. Indeed were it not for the undoubted authority of these records, it would be difficult to believe the statement, that he was in Cheshire during the summer and autumn of that year. Upon the first discovery of the plot, in June, Monmouth absconded, (Burnet ii. p. 548.) He was banished from Court, and presumed to be on the continent, where the King of France offered a reward of 500 pistoles for his apprehension, and that of Lord Grey and Sir Thomas Armstrong; after some negotiations a proclamation dated Whitehall, 25th Nov., announces that Monmouth had, the preceding day, surrendered himself to the court, from which he was again banished in a few days. Monmouth was, certainly, arrested on his return from Cheshire, at an entertainment given by the Corporation of Stafford. in September, by a warrant from Mr. Secretary Jenkins, taken to London, and there released on bail. *Carte's Life of Ormonde*, book viii. p. 530.

It is, however, probable that the Duke and those by whom he was accompanied, were then engaged in promoting some intrigue, similar to that by which two years afterwards he lost his life; as "security of the peace was immediately required from Glegg of Gayton, Whitmore of Thurstaston, and others, with whom the Duke was known to have associated, as well as several baronets and others of distinction in the county." *See ante*, 116.

the westward, the marshes, a plain upwards of five hundred acres, on which graze more than a thousand head of cattle, lay extended beneath the eye of the spectator, protected from the inundations of the sea by a range of sandhills and an artificial embankment, which cause the numerous vessels in the Rock Channel to have the appearance of sailing on dry land.

Passing through the village, to obtain a view of the west side of the hill and lighthouse, the lover of the rural and picturesque is struck with the burst of scenery which presents itself to the eye of the spectator. "The hamlets of Woodchurch and Upton, in sequestered beauty, amidst verdant pastures, waving corn, and masses of foliage on an undulating surface, challenge attention in the first instance. Wallasey, Leasowe Castle and Lighthouse, with the low land along the margin of the sea, sweeping to the estuary of the Dee, stand more distant to the right; with Moel Nant and the mountain scenery which flanks the eastern side of the Vale of Clwyd on the left. In front, when the weather is favourable, appear the Great and Little Ormsheads and Penman Mawr, whose huge base rises from the sea, on the north; while to the southward are all the magnificent Carnyds, and alpine scenery to the peaks of Snowdon and the sugar-loaf crest of Moel Siabod; scenery familiar to all who have visited the neighbourhood of Capel Curig. The foreground of the moor is broken up and diversified by its undulating character, the eye resting upon numerous distinct parts, each furnishing ample materials for the pencil or the pen. Here are masses of rock and sand, quarrying operations extended over a wild and irregular space, rude cottages, gable ends of houses, purple heather, and patches of verdure in all the varieties and brilliant colours of nature; there, the sweeping vale, distant church and villages, and beautiful and verdant enclosures, together with the placid ocean and every description of vessels in the distance." (*Kaye.*)

#### MORETON.

The township of Moreton contains 1169 acres of land, valued in the county books at £927, and has a population of 330 persons. It is situated in a dreary flat, close to the shores of the sea, with roads excessively bad, and a bridge as dangerous to travellers as it is disgraceful to the county. It is, in every point of view, an extremely poor village, and the greater part of the township is below the level of the sea at high water.

The manor of Moreton is the property of Mr. Vyner, who obtained it under the same title as Bidston. There was formerly a chapel-of-ease, under the mother-church of Bidston, in this township, which, after remaining disused for a long time, was, according to Bishop Gastrells' *Notitia*, destroyed in 1690. It was most probably demolished at an earlier period, as it is not mentioned by Leland, Camden, or the more minute local itinerant, Webb, who visited Moreton in 1620. Randle Holme, in 1668, merely says it had a chapel.

#### SAUGHALL MASSIE.

Saughall Massie contains 860 acres, valued at £862, and in 1841 was inhabited by 152 persons. It is difficult to conceive what could have induced the old historian Webb to describe it as a "very gallant lordship." It is in every respect, if possible, worse than the adjacent township of Moreton, with which, from an early period, it has been united, and with which under the same conveyances, it became the property of Mr. Vyner, all the tenantry of both townships doing service at his manor-court, held at Bidston.

#### CLAUGHTON-CUM-GRANGE.

The township of Cloughton-cum-Grange having been, by a recent Act of Parliament, incorporated with that of Birkenhead, will be hereafter noticed with that township. It may, however, be here observed, that since the dissolution Cloughton has been held under a different title from the other parts of this parish. It was granted to Ralph Worsley of Worsley, together with the manor and township of Birkenhead, and having descended to Mr. Price, of Bryn-y-pys, both the manors, and a considerable portion of the estates have since been purchased by William Jackson, Esq., who is at present manorial lord of Cloughton, as also of Birkenhead.

## Parish of Bromborough.



IN this parish are only two townships, Bromborough, or as it is more usually called, Bromborough, or Brombro', and Brimstage, anciently Brunstath, which are separated from each other by the township of Poulton. The parish, which extends over 2375 acres, is valued at £2823, and in 1841 contained 547 inhabitants.

The manor of Brombro' is undoubtedly of great antiquity. It is mentioned by very early writers, and there have not been wanting those who, from its ancient name, Brimsburgh, or Brumesburgh, have claimed for it the honour of being the field in which the Danes were so signally defeated by Athelstan. This is, however, mere conjecture. But it does appear that Elfreda, *The Lady of Mercia*, founded some monastic house at this place, in or about the year 912, and that it had ceased to exist at the completion of the *Doomsday Book*. Although Brombro' is not named in that survey, it is comprehended under Eastham, the church and manor-house of which were situate in the present village of Brombro', and were held by the Earl Hugh. Randal de Gernons, about the year 1152, presented them to the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh, as a recompense for some injuries he had inflicted on the monks of that abbey, and in their possession they both remained until the dissolution. Brombro' was then granted to the dean and chapter of the newly formed diocese, and, with the greater part of these estates, it fell into the hands of Sir Richard Cotton. Subsequently it was purchased by Bishop Bridgeman, and after several alienations, the manor and court, with the ancient hall, became the property of James Mainwaring, Esq., of Chester. At the period when the acquisitions of the Cottons were portioned among the various fee-farmers, "Henry Hardware had the old manor-house called Brombro' Court, the demesne, the water mills, and a wood, called William Drife, valued at £9 per annum," all of which were, in 1770-1, purchased by the son of the above named James Mainwaring. The estates thus again united, have descended to the great-grandson of the

purchaser of the Hardware property, the Rev. James Mainwaring, A.M., Oxon., in whom the rectory, with the hall, the manor court-house, and nearly the entire of the township is vested.

The parish church of Brombro', lately demolished, was of great antiquity. When, at the separation of the manors of Eastham and Brombro', Earl Randal gave them, with their churches, to the abbey of Chester, that at Eastham had only been recently erected in that newly formed manor. The priority of Brombro' church was acknowledged in the papal charter of Honorius, confirming the grant of the Earl, in which the words *Eccl. de Brombro' cum capella de Estham* occur, and it is also stated in the ecclesiastic taxation of Pope Nicholas. The church is described by Mr. Ormerod, Lysons, and others, as exhibiting an elegant specimen of Saxon architecture, and one part evidently of so remote a period as to lead to the opinion that it was part of the remains of some monastic institution, perhaps that founded by Elfreda. It was, however, small, and in a wretched state of delapidation. The stone of which it was built had become so extremely friable that every endeavour to repair it was ineffectual, and in 1827-8 an entirely new edifice was erected on its site, by the Rev. Mr. Mainwaring, at his own expense.

Of the charitable donations to this parish little can be said. The Parliamentary Commissioners, in 1837, only reported a rent charge of £4 10s. per annum. The living is described in the Clergy List as a perpetual curacy, of the annual value of only £51 per annum; but the rector, in his lay capacity, is proprietor of the great tithes, which in this parish have been commuted.

#### BROMBROROUGH, OR BROMBRO'.

The township contains 1525 acres of land, of the annual value of £2053. In 1801 it had 277 inhabitants, and 52 houses. The return of 1841 states the population to be 412, which is incorrect, as the number did not exceed 331. The township is intersected by an excellent road, which runs between Chester and Birkenhead, A winding branch of the Mersey is also navigable for nearly two miles, at the head of which piers have been built, for the accommodation of small vessels that trade on the Mersey with coals and other materials, and for those employed in connection with the Brombro' mills. Large quantities of stone are also shipped, to facilitate the loading of which powerful cranes have been erected on the water side, at the termination of the railways which communicate with the quarries.

Brombro' had formerly a chartered market, held on every Monday; but this has been long discontinued. Its profits were granted by Prince Edward, when Earl of Chester, to the monks of St. Werburgh, as possessors of the manor, and he also gave them the tolls and other profits of a fair annually held on the feast of St. Barnabas, to whom the church was dedicated.

The village contains several good houses, and possesses an appearance of comfort and respectability beyond many in this part of the hundred. There are two wells that have been frequently noticed; one, the waters of which are frequently so warm as to have gained for it the appellation of the boiling well; and another, the waters of which possess an encrustating, or petrifying quality. Moss, leaves, and small twigs, after remaining in it for some time, become encrusted in a beautiful manner.

The Court-house, the old seat of the Hardwares, is a stone building, with bay windows and indented and scallopped gables. The moated site of the Abbot's Court adjoins the Court-house, and the line of the fortifications is still visible. They occupied an extremely strong position at the end of a narrow peninsula, accessible only from the south. The court of the abbot was occasionally held at the manor-house, which was one of those directed by the charter of Earl Randal to be kept in a state of security and readiness for that purpose. The strength of the works here, as well as at Brimstage and their other manor-house at Irby, are sufficient proofs of the apprehensions entertained by the monks of the incursions of the Welsh.

Brombro' Hall, the seat of the Mainwarings, is an elegant and handsome building, most delightfully situated on a gentle eminence which gradually slopes to the Mersey, affording a most varied prospect of that river and the surrounding shores of Lancashire and Cheshire. This was formerly the residence of Dr. Bridgeman, bishop of Chester, whose son, Sir Orlando, Chief Baron of the Exchequer after the restoration, sold the property to the Mainwarings. Material alterations were made in the edifice by the father of the present possessor, by whom they have been continued to such an extent that the house may be said to have been rebuilt. It adjoins the village, at a distance of four miles from Birkenhead and eleven from Chester. The extensive grounds are admirably laid out, and the gardens are celebrated for the choice specimens of fruits and flowers they furnish to the horticultural exhibitions of Liverpool and the neighbouring towns. The large woods that intervene between the village and Eastham Ferry have been the subject of various transfers and grants, and are alluded to in many



ancient writings. The public are now, under certain restrictions, permitted to walk through them, and they afford a pleasing lounge.

### BRIMSTAGE.

Brimstage, or as it is called in many ancient records, Brunstall, Brunstath, Brumstache, and Brumstagh, is situate about twelve miles from Chester.

In 1801 it contained 127 inhabitants, occupying 25 houses, and the census of 1841 only exhibited a population of 135. It extends over 850 acres, valued in the county books at £770.

Brimstage was the ancient settlement of the Domvilles, a house of high consideration among the gentry of Cheshire, most probably a junior branch of the Barons of Montalt, as the Domvilles not only held their lands under them, but bore their arms. The earliest mention of this family is an inquisition, held 6 Edward I., quoted in the *Leycester MSS.*, from which it appears that Sir Richard Domville, Knight, then held this manor and that of Oxton, from Robert de Montalt, by military tenure. They continued in this family until the marriage of Margery, their heiress, with Sir Hugh Hulse, or Holes, who held the then important office of Sergeant of the Bridge Gate, at Chester, which will be more particularly referred to, under Raby, and was Deputy Justice under Mowbray, Earl Marshal, and Chief Justiciary of Chester. The only son by this marriage assumed the arms of Domville, and having only one daughter, Margaret, the vast estates of the Hulses, Rabys, Domvilles, and several other Cheshire families became vested in her. Upon her marriage, in 1440, to Sir John Troutbeck, Lord of Dunham-on-the-hill and Chamberlain of Chester, he became, in her right, Sergeant of the Bridge Gate of Chester, and Lord of Little Neston, Oxton, Raby, Barnston, and Brunstath. He was slain, with many other Cheshire gentry, at the fatal battle of Blore Heath, three years after the death of his wife. These manors, and the greater part of the other estates of the Domvilles and the Troutbecks, are now the property of the Earl of Shrewsbury, having been conveyed to his ancestor, Sir John Talbot, of Albrighton, in the county of Salop, upon his marriage with Margaret, great-granddaughter and sole heiress of this Sir John Troutbeck.

A large portion of the township is situated in a plain, which by continued labour has been worked into a high state of cultivation. The long and very straggling village stands in a rather peculiar situation, the houses of which it is composed being nearly

all placed on one side of a ravine which extends through the hamlet, and down the centre of which a rivulet runs. This, after heavy rains, is the cause of much inconvenience to the inhabitants, who greatly complain of the badness of the roads in the adjacent townships.

Brimstage Hall, long the residence of the Domvilles, and most probably of the later generations of the Troutbecks, is a stone edifice with many claims to attention. It stands on one side of the village, on a flat mound, of some elevation above the opposite buildings. It was formerly surrounded with a moat, varying from fourteen to twenty yards in width, three sides of which are yet distinguishable, while the fourth was formed by the rivulet which runs through the town. The area thus enclosed was about sixty acres, and in some parts it was further protected by an embankment, but little of which now remains, as, in the improvements of the farm, the materials have been returned to the moat, from which they were formerly excavated. The hall, standing considerably above the rivulet, which is crossed by several small and very rude bridges, presents a pleasing subject for the pencil. In the original state of the fabric, it must have been of great strength and importance, and notwithstanding some recent alterations, it yet presents one of the most perfect and ancient specimens of domestic architecture in this part of the county, although it is not of so remote a period as the adjacent tower. It was certainly inhabited at the latter part of the sixteenth century, as some curious letters are yet in existence, written in 1592, by John Poole, of Poole, who seems to have been a superior bailiff, or steward, to the Talbots, and then resided there. Immediately beyond the boundary of the moat, about one hundred and fifty acres were formerly laid out in a park, a name still attached to the various estates into which this portion of the township has been divided.

Attached to it, and in fact forming part of the structure, is a very ancient square tower, of considerable height, the only remains of a building which has evidently been of much greater extent, and probably the ancient stronghold of the Hulses, of which this tower was the *donyon* or keep. A side door opens to a circular spiral staircase, leading to the summit of the tower, which commands an extensive prospect. The corbels supporting the embattlements by which it is crowned, closely correspond with the style of those of Warwick Castle. The groining of the lower apartment, which has evidently been a chapel, is beautifully perfect, and belongs to the decorated style which prevailed in the fourteenth century. The groins spring from semi-octagonal

piers in the side walls, and at the angles they are supported by curiously raised corbels, the front of which are wrought into grotesque heads. The intersections of the ribs are concealed under elaborately carved bosses. From the general appearance of the fabric, it is undoubtedly that for which a license was granted 11th February, 1398, permitting Sir Hugh Hulse and Margery his wife to erect an oratory at their residence. In a part of the garden, near to the tower, several bodies have been found, laid out with such regularity as to lead to the opinion that it was formerly used as a cemetery.

Any account of Brombro' which did not allude to the family of its respected proprietor, would be imperfect. In the Domesday survey, Ranulphus de Mesnilwarin, a distinguished follower of the Norman Conqueror, by whom he was liberally rewarded, appears, as holding fifteen manors in Cheshire, one of which was Warmincham. This township was made the principal settlement of Ranulphus, and here afterwards resided Richard de Mesnilwaren and Roger de Mesnilgarin, who are supposed with a probability amounting almost to certainty, to have been his sons. Of Richard nothing is known beyond his giving Blacon to the Abbot and Convent of St. Werburgh at Chester, as noticed in the foundation Charter of 1093 : but the descendants of Roger may be traced in direct succession to the present time. Sir Ralph Mainwaring, Chief Justice of Chester, *temp.* Henry II. and Richard I., great-grandson of Roger, married Amicia, daughter of Hugh Kyveliok, Earl of Chester ; a marriage which has acquired a degree of celebrity from the long-protracted disputes which arose, centuries after her decease, as to her legitimacy, between her descendant Sir Thomas Mainwaring and Sir Peter Leycester, the ancient historian of Cheshire.

Sir Roger, the son of the judge, having two sons, Warmincham, and the principal part of the possessions of the family were inherited by Thomas, the elder, and ultimately became vested in his only grandchild. They were conveyed, at her marriage, to the Trussels, in which family they remained until, by subsequent marriages, they came into the possession of the Earl of Oxford, by whose descendants they were sold to the immediate ancestors of the present Lord Crewe.

To the second son of Sir Roger was given the manor and estate of Over Peover, and taking his residence there, he became the founder of the Mainwarings of Peover, a house which continued in uninterrupted male descent through nineteen generations, until 1797. Upon the death of Sir Henry, a bachelor, in April, in that year, the

title was extinct; but the estates, according to the will of the deceased baronet, became the property of his uterine brother, Thomas Wettenhall, of Walthamstow, in the county of Essex, Esq., who took the name and bore the arms of Mainwaring; but he died in the following year. His only son was created a baronet in 1804, and served the office of high sheriff of Cheshire in 1806. The tenth in descent of the Peover branch was Sir John Mainwaring, knighted in France 1513, who married Catherine, the sister of William Honford, of Honford, in the county of Chester, Esq., and had a numerous family, most of whom died young; but by the second son, who became his heir, the Peover line was continued. The next surviving son, having married Alice, daughter and co-heiress of Robert Boughey, of Whitmore, in the county of Salop, Esq., took up his residence there, and became the founder of the Mainwarings of Whitmore.

The fifth in descent from this Edward was James, an Alderman of Chester, who purchased the Brombro' estates, and after great alterations and improvements at the Hall, made it the principal residence of the family, which thenceforth should more properly be designated as the Mainwarings of Brombro'. The son of this alderman, James, one of the Barons of the Exchequer, who, as already mentioned, became the purchaser of the manor-court from the Hardwares, married Mary, daughter and co-heir of Charles Kynaston, of Oteley Park, in the county of Salop, Esq. His eldest son, Charles, was the father of James Mainwaring, Esq. whose only son, the present Rev. James Mainwaring, may be thus traced through an uninterrupted course of no less than twenty-six generations, and a period of seven hundred and sixty years, to be the direct descendant of the Norman baron, Ranulphus de Mesnilwarin.\*

Charles, the son of the Baron of the Exchequer, was also the father of Charles, in holy orders, of Oteley, who had two sons. The eldest, Charles Kynaston Mainwaring, of Oteley Park, Esq., by his marriage with Frances, youngest daughter of John Lloyd Salusbury, of Galltfaenan, in the county of Denbigh, Esq., has issue, a son, Salusbury Kynaston Mainwaring, born 8th September, 1844, who is presumptive heir to the Brombro' estates. The second son, Townsend Mainwaring, of Marcheviol Hall, near Wrexham, Esq., member for the Denbighshire Boroughs, married Anna Maria, the only sister of the above named Frances. The ladies of the two brothers will be co-heiresses.

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* From Ranulphus to Sir William, founder of the house of Peover	- - - - -	6
From Sir William of Peover to Edward of Whitmore	- - - - -	11
From Edward of Whitmore to James of Brombro'	- - - - -	5
From James first of Brombro' to the present Rev. James Mainwaring	- - - - -	4—26

## Parish of Burton.



THE parish of Burton, which contains the two townships of Burton and Puddington, extends over a surface of 2522 acres, and is valued in the county books at £3139 per annum. It is bounded on the Western side by the river Dee, and on the others by the parishes of Eastham, Neston, and Shotwick ; and it contained, by the late census, 420 inhabitants.

### BURTON.

The township of Burton is situated about nine miles from Chester and four from Neston. Its population, which in 1801 was 288 by the census of 1841 was returned at only 282. It contains 1340 acres, valued in the county books at £1686.

Burton had formerly a market, on Thursdays, long since discontinued, and also a fair for three days at the festival of St. James, which was granted in 1298, by Walter de Langton, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, to which See the manor of Burton had then been for a long period annexed. It was afterwards held as a copyhold under that bishopric for several centuries, by the Masseys, of Puddington ; and in 1755 it was leased by the Rev. Richard Congreve, in whose possession it continued until his death, in 1782. The reversion of the manor and lands of Burton were in 1806 purchased from the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, by his son and successor, Richard Congreve, Esq., of Burton Hall, and of Aldermanston House, in the county of Berks, also of Congreve, in the county of Stafford, where the family have held a place of high consideration from a very remote period.

The parish church, dedicated to St. Nicholas, is a plain stone building, erected in 1721, on the site of a very ancient church, a small portion of which, called the Massey Chancel, yet forms part of the present edifice. It contains a nave, chancel, and an aisle, divided on the north side from the body of the church by five arches, and it is furnished with a tower. At the eastern end of the aisle, in the Massey Chancel, are

several monuments of the Stanley family, and also of the Masseys, so long resident at the neighbouring township of Puddington.

The church of Burton, and the tithes, were granted by Alexander de Savensby, Bishop of Lichfield, to the Hospital of St. Andrew, in Denhall, on account of its extreme poverty, and the masters of the hospital were uniformly elected Rectors of Burton, until about 1494-5, when both benefices were appropriated by Henry VII. at the request of Bishop Smith, to the Hospital of St. John the Baptist at Lichfield. The Rectory is now held under lease from the hospital by Mr. Congreve, who, as lessee, is sole patron of the perpetual curacy, and by whom alone the curate is nominated.\* The present incumbent is the Rev. Ralph Congreve. The annual value of the curacy is stated in the Clergy List of 1841 at £54.

Burton is situated on the side of a rocky eminence, which gradually rises from the shores of the Dee, and by which it is sheltered from the north winds. The village possesses few claims to attention; but Burton Hall, a fine modern building, erected by Mr. Congreve for his own residence, commands a magnificent view of the Welsh mountains, and the rich scenery on the western banks of the river. In 1807 an Act was obtained for the enclosure of a great part of the township.

Near the south door of the church, on a plain blue flag stone, is inscribed

“Nathaniel Wilson, May 29, 1702.  
 Alice Wilson, had issue,  
 Samuel, James, Joseph, Sarah, Benjamin,  
 Thomas, *Bishop of Man*, and Mary.”

This Thomas was the celebrated Dr. Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man. He was born, as he states in his *Diary*, at Burton, on the 20th Dec., 1663, “of honest parents, fearing God.” Having been educated at Trinity College, Dublin, he was upon his ordination in 1686, appointed to the new church, in Winwick, of which parish his uncle, Dr. Sherlock, was rector. The salary of this curacy was only £30 per annum. In 1692, the Earl of Derby made him tutor to his son, Lord Strange, at a salary of £30, which, with £20 as Master of the Latham Alms-houses, constituted his entire

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\* And not the Master of St. John's, as erroneously stated by Mr. Ormerod, although apparently on the authority of a communication from Mr. Congreve. In the *Clergy List*, the Rev. C. Law appears as patron of the curacy, which is not the fact. The nomination entirely rests with the Patron, Mr. Congreve, as stated above.

income until, five years afterwards, the Earl made him Bishop of Sodor and Man, where, on 7th March, 1755, he died, in the ninety-third year of his age, having held that see fifty-eight years. He was several times offered an English bishopric, which, from his great attachment to the inhabitants of the Isle of Man, he refused, although the revenues of his diocese did not exceed three hundred pounds a year. He was invited to France by Cardinal Fleury, who expressed great anxiety to see him, as he believed the Bishop and himself to be the two oldest and poorest prelates in Europe. The reply of the Bishop is said to have been so pleasing to the Cardinal, that he procured an order that no French ships of war should ravage the coasts of the island. By his lady, Mary, daughter of Thomas Patten, of Warrington, Esq., he had several children, but only one son who survived him. This son, Dr. Wilson, Prebendary of Westminster, and Rector of St. Stephens, Walbrook, made some extensive purchases in Wirral, which have descended to John Wilson Patten, of Warrington, Esq., M.P. for the northern division of Lancashire.

There is a good free-school on the road to Nesse, built of red stone, towards the erection and endowment of which, the excellent Bishop Wilson gave £400, and his son, the prebendary, £200 more, with 26 acres of lands. The master's qualification is that he shall be a member of the Church of England, and the governors, who have the appointment, are the vicars of Burton and Great Neston. Its endowment is for all poor boys of Burton and also four of Puddington, whose parents should be unable to pay for their learning; "scholars are not admitted till able to read," a restriction on which the parliamentary commissioners have made some observations in their "31st Report, 1837."

### PUDDINGTON.

The township of Puddington, anciently Podinton or Putitone, lays eight miles north-west from Chester, and contains 1182 acres, of the annual value of £1453. Its population, which in 1801 was 139, by the last census had only increased to 146.

Hamon de Massey held this manor at the time of the Domesday Survey, where it is noticed, under the Earl Hugh.

The Massey family, whose ancestor Richard Massie, a younger brother of Hamon the fifth baron of Dunham, settled in this township in the early part of the thirteenth century, held the manor for many generations under the lords of Storeton, in right of

the grant made by Randal de Meschines, Earl of Chester, to Alan Sylvestre: William Massey, the last heir male of this family, and a zealous Roman Catholic, died in 1716. He was an active supporter of the cause of the Pretender to the English Crown, and was engaged in his behalf at the battle of Preston, from which it is traditionally said he fled alone and effected his escape into Wirral by the desperate yet successful attempt of swimming his horse across the Mersey near Hooton. He was subsequently taken at Puddington and conveyed to Chester Castle, where he was confined until his death, which occurred in the month of February in the following year. His estates he bequeathed to Thomas Stanley, his god-son, a younger son of the then baronet. This Thomas Stanley died in 1740, having previously taken the name of Massey; he bequeathed his property to his elder brother, John, who also took the additional name of Massey. Upon the death of Sir William Stanley, the fifth baronet of Hooton, in 1792, the title and the estates of both families were concentrated in his uncle, the said John Stanley Massey, who then again resumed the name of Stanley; he died in 1794. His son and successor, the seventh baronet, died the following year; and the manor and estate of Puddington are now the property of Rowland Errington of Newnham Paddocks in the county of Leicester, Esq., second son of the late Sir Thomas Stanley Massey Stanley, and brother to the present baronet of Hooton.\*

\*The following extracts, from *Bishop Cartwright's Diary*, are here inserted, as they refer to parties then resident in Puddington and the neighbourhood.

"4 January, 1687.—I went to Sir Thomas Poole's to dinner, where I was kindly treated, and lodged that and the next night, with Sir Thomas Grosvenor *et ux*, Sir Rowland Stanley *et ux*, Mr. Peters, Mr. Poole, Mr. Massey, and Mr. (the) Dean.

"5.—We dined at Sir Rowland Stanley's, and returned at night to Sir James Poole's, Mr. Babthorp, his priest, with us.

"6.—We went to Mr. Massey's to dinner, and returned with him that night to Chester, where he did us the favour to take a lodging with us. Mr. Latham, *pr.*, and Mr. Kempe, *alias* Osbeston, *pr.*, dined with us.

"7.—Mr. Massey dined with me, and after supper Mr. Massey came to me again, and discoursed with me concerning poor Sir Thomas Grosvenor's carriage to his wife, and her resolution to enter into a monastery if he did not alter speedily, and consult her reputation and his own better than he did.

"8.—Sir Thomas Grosvenor, Mr. Wilkinson, and his friend, Mr. Kent, dined with me, and in the afternoon Sir Thomas and My Lady Grosvenor discoursed all those matters and causes of differences, and agreed upon these terms;—That Mr. Massey should come to his house at any time when he was in the country, and be entertained as others; and that if any servants carried any tales between them, on either side, they should be turned away; and that no public discourse of religion should be suffered in their house, but My Lady be permitted to enjoy hers in private; she not writing to Mr. M., but what, upon request, she should show to Sir Thomas, and so with what return he made her. And so Sir Thomas and My Lady, and Mrs. Rooksby, who, with my wife and daughter Sarah, were auditors of the whole matter, supped together, with great satisfaction to all parties. My Lady brought us a cheese."



The ancient seat of the Masseys has long since been taken down. •Puddington Hall is an elegant modern edifice, and now occupied by William Tatton Egerton, Esq. M.P. for the northern division of the county.

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The arrangement appears to have been very satisfactory to the concerned, as numerous entries in the *Diary* attest the suppers and other convivial meetings of the Bishop, Mr. Massey, Sir James Poole, and Sir Thomas Grosvenor, who was frequently accompanied by his lady.

The parties referred to were Sir James Poole, head of the Roman Catholic family of Poole; as was Sir Rowland Stanley of the Stanleys of Hooton, both in the adjacent parish of Eastham. Mr. Massey was doubtless the head of the other great Roman Catholic family settled at Puddington, and father of the Sir William who died in confinement in Chester Castle after the defeat at Preston. Latham and Kemp were two Romish priests, friends of the Bishop. Sir Thomas Grosvenor was the third baronet of Eaton; he served the office of mayor of Chester in 1685, and was, at the date of the *Diary*, member for the city. He was thought to be favourable to the designs of the King, having been singled out by Jeffries, as foreman of the jury that presented the necessity of requiring sureties from the gentlemen of the county who had paid such attention to the Duke of Monmouth; and holding a commission in the Earl of Shrewsbury's regiment of horse, he was promised by the King, in a private audience, the command of that regiment and a peerage, if he would support a Bill then in the House for the repeal of the Test Act and the several laws against the Papists. But he resigned his commission, and gave a direct negative to the proposal, preferring, as says the *Peerage* from which these facts are derived, "the religion and liberty of his country to all honour and power so likely at that time to be attended with popery and slavery." His lady had very different views. She was the only daughter of Alexander Davies, of Ebury, in the county of Middlesex, Esq., and becoming his sole heiress, she brought into the Grosvenor family the immense property they now possess in Westminster.

Sir Thomas was married when only nineteen years old, and he died in June, 1700. His lady survived him twenty-nine years. Of her history after his decease, there are some romantic particulars, if they can be relied upon, in that singular work, the *Collectanea of Colonel Colepeper*, now in the Harleian department of the *Museum Manuscripts*, particularly in the second and seventh volumes.

## Parish of Eastham.



IN the Parish of Eastham, which is one of the most extensive in the Hundred of Wirral, are included the townships of Eastham, Childer Thornton, Hooton, Overpool, Netherpool, Great Sutton, Little Sutton, and a part of Whitby, extending over 7100 acres, valued in the county books at £9513. It formerly also included the township of Great Stanney, as the chartulary of St. Werburgh recites a grant to the monks of Stanlaw, of lands there, on condition of their paying to the mother-church of Eastham, all the ecclesiastical dues to which they were entitled before the settlement of the monks at that monastery.

### EASTHAM.

The Township of Eastham contains 1205 acres, valued at £2144 per annum. Its population in 1801 was 348, and by the census of 1841 the number returned was 370.

The manor of Eastham was at the time of the Domesday Survey treated as a part of Brombro' which then contained the church and the manor-house of "Estham." In 1152 this manor together with that of Brombro, was given by Randal de Gernons, Earl of Chester, to the convent in that city, as a compensation for some injuries he had done to their house. By the charter conveying these townships the earl required from all his barons and followers upon their allegiance, that this donation, made for his health and absolution, should be respected by them; and he adds this imprecation, that if any of them or their heirs should diminish the gift in any respect, that God would lessen him, so lessened, destroy him, and so destroyed, eternally condemn him.

The church, dedicated to St. Mary, which Randal a few years previously to this donation had erected at Eastham village, was given with the manor, and they remained in possession of the monastery at Chester until the dissolution, when they were conferred upon the dean and chapter of the new bishopric; Sir Richard Cotton having soon

afterwards obtained them from the chapter, the manor was purchased from his successor by Sir Rowland Stanley of Hooton, ancestor of the present baronet.

The dean and chapter continued the patrons of the vicarage, which is usually given to one of the prebendaries, but the tithes, which had been given to the abbot even before the church, and which were subsequently obtained from the dean and chapter by the Cottons, are now held by various parties; those of Eastham, Hooton, and Childer Thornton belong to Sir W. T. Massey Stanley, those of Overpool and Netherpool to the Marquis of Westminster, those of Little Sutton to Joseph White, Esq., those of Great Sutton to the representatives of the late Rev. Thomas Edwards of Aldford, and those of that part of Whitby which is in this parish belong to Mr. Hignet of Fulke-Stapleford.

The Rev. Unwin Clarke, A.M., archdeacon and rural dean of Chester, vicar of Neston, and a prebendary of Chester, is also vicar of Eastham, the annual emolument of which, according to the clergy list of 1841, is stated at £240.

### EASTHAM.

The church of Eastham is an extensive and handsome fabric of red stone, with a tower surmounted by an elegant spire; the interior of the church contains a nave, chancel, and two side aisles, divided from the body of the church by four pointed arches springing from low octagonal pillars surmounted with capitals. A considerable part is said to have been rebuilt by Inigo Jones, but Mr. Ormerod and others doubt this from the fact of there occurring among some mutilated letters under the chancel window the date 17 ~~E R~~. when the great architect would then have been only two years old, 1574.\*

The north aisle terminates in a chancel belonging to the house of Hooton, and called the Stanley Chancel, in which are many monuments to that illustrious family. In the pannelling of one of the Grosvenor pews in the north aisle are three ancient shields, elaborately carved in wood, with very ancient mantlings; they consist of the arms of Poole, and of Poole quartered with Buerton, and also with Capenhurst, the

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\* Not much reliance should at any time be placed on this presumed chronological guide; it has always been too much the practice to introduce ancient pieces of glass and sculpture into renovated buildings, the effect of which is only to bewilder the antiquary.

latter doubtless being the bearings of Sir John Poole, Knt., who died *temp.* Richard II., and was son of Robert de Poole, whose wife was the daughter of Thomas de Capenhurst.\*

The village of Eastham is pleasantly situated, about nine miles from Chester, and one from the river Mersey. Carlett Ferry, or, as it is more usually called, Eastham Ferry, was long the favourite route between Liverpool and Chester, as many as twenty to thirty stage coaches running daily from the city to meet the steam boats; but the Birkenhead railway has entirely superseded this mode of travelling.

There are few more delightfully situated places in this locality than the immediate vicinity of the ferry, which is within half an hour's sail from the piers of Liverpool. The neighbourhood has long been the favourite resort of many of the denizens of that crowded town, who, while thus enabled to inhale the pure breeze, can participate in the picturesque scenery of the finely wooded country by which it is surrounded. An elegant pile of buildings, that have recently been erected by Sir William T. Massey Stanley, for an hotel, forms an excellent substitute for the unsightly fabric which, previously stood on the margin of the ferry, and the want of accommodation at which much impaired the attractions of the village. A new pier, with landing places, is now in course of erection, at which larger and more powerful steam packets will be employed, and a regularity of dispatch insured, that cannot fail to be advantageous. During the summer months the lower woods of Hooton and Brombro' are open to the public, and from present appearances it would seem that Eastham,—the Richmond of Cheshire, as it has not infelicitously been called,—will rival the glories of its former popularity.

\* In the Harleian MSS. 2151, are copies of several inscriptions existing in 1593, one of which identifies the date of the ancient window:—

“Pray for the soule of Peter Stanley of Byckersteth, Esq., one of younger sones of Willm. Stanley of Hoton, Knt. and Elizabeth his wife, being daughter and heire of James Scaresbreeke and Margaret his wife, which Margaret was daughter and heire of Thomas Athurton of Byckersteth, Esq., which made this window in Anno 1543.”

And in the window on the south side was

“Orate pro bono statu Ranulphi Pull, c'fici, qui hanc fenestram vitream fecit, A. D. 1423.”

In the church-yard are many inscriptions which attest the salubrity of Wirral, and the longevity of its inhabitants. Among others are two on blue slate stones, placed nearly together, to the eastward of the church:—

ERECTED TO THE MEMORY OF  
JOHN LINFORD,  
A Servant to the Stanley Family for  
upwards of eighty years, who  
died 7th Aug., 1831, aged 93 years.

ERECTED TO THE MEMORY OF  
MARGARET TURNBULL,  
A Servant to the Stanley Family for  
upwards of sixty years, who  
died 31st Oct., 1837, aged 81 years.

### CHILDER THORNTON.

The township of Childer Thornton contains 693 acres, valued at £1049, and in 1841 had a population of 361; a great increase upon the return of 1801, when the census exhibited only 112 persons, occupying 18 houses.

Thornton does not appear in the Domesday survey, but it formed a part of the ancient possessions of the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh, with whom it continued until the dissolution when it was settled on the dean and chapter of Chester. Soon afterwards it passed with the greater part of their property to the Cottons, by whom it was sold in severalties, and the manor is now divided among the freeholders inheriting those purchases, who exercise manorial rights in succession; the principal landowner is Sir William Thomas Massey Stanley, Bart., who has by purchase added to the lands which his ancestry had held under the convent since before the dissolution.

Childer Thornton, Thornton Mayo, (from William de Mayo, to whom Cotton sold half the manor,) or Thornton, as it is more generally called, is situated on the turnpike road between Chester and Birkenhead, being nearly equi-distant from each. The principal lodges and entrance to Hooton Park are on this road; they are from designs by Wyatt, and previous to the erection of the Grosvenor lodges were considered the most elegant buildings for the purpose in the county.

There was a school established here in 1650, with a small endowment in land, which being found insufficient for its maintenance, the rents were applied in aid of the parochial school at Eastham, to which the children were transferred.

## HOOTON.

Hooton contains 996 acres, valued in the county books at £1134. Its population, which in 1801 was 91 persons, occupying 20 houses, was by the last census returned as amounting to 120.

The interesting township of Hooton, lies in one of the most pleasant situations of which the banks of the estuary of the Mersey can boast, shaded with venerable oak trees, of a growth exceeding any which the western breezes have elsewhere permitted on the shores of Wirral. These claims to attention, however, it has been justly observed, "are of a very secondary nature, when compared with those it possesses from having contained, during a lapse of five centuries, the seat of the eldest branch of the illustrious house of Stanley."

Hooton was, in the Domesday Book, included in the possessions of Richard de Vernon, the Norman baron of Shipbrook, under whom it was held by an ancient family of the name of Hotone, which became extinct in heirs male in the early part of the reign of Richard I. It then passed by marriage to Randle Walensis, or Welshman, as appears by a grant copied in the *Harleian MSS.*, whereby Thomas, the son of Randle, releases his right in Hotone, which was the inheritance of his mother, to Richard his brother. After this alliance, Walensis occasionally assumed the name of Hotone, and the estate was finally conveyed, by the marriage of their heiress Margery, only daughter of William de Hoton, (*post mort. Inq.*, 16 Richard II.) to William de Stanley, to whom the nearest of kin of the Hotons confirmed possession of the manor and estates by deed, 12 Henry IV.

The right to the bailiwick of the Forest of Wirral and the manor of Storeton were fully proved before Jordan de Macclesfield, Justice-in-eyre to the Earl of Chester, in 1346, by Sir William, the son of John Stanley, of Stanley and Storeton, who was son and heir of Sir William de Stanlegh, of the county of Stafford, by Jane, daughter and heiress of Sir Philip Bamville, of Storeton, Forester of Wirral. Upon the disafforesting of Wirral, in 1360, a grant was made of twenty marks per annum to William his son, (who married Alice, daughter of Sir Hamon de Massey, of Timperley,) as a compensation for the loss of the fees and perquisites attached to the office of Chief Forester. This Sir William Stanley had two sons. The younger, Sir John Stanley, K.G., Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, upon his marriage with Isabella, daughter and sole

heiress of Sir Thomas Latham, of Latham and Knowsley, Knight, settled at Latham, and became the founder of the noble and distinguished house of Derby. By the elder, whose marriage to Margaret of Hooton is already noticed, the Hooton family was continued; and a variety of *post mortem* inquisitions show their splendid alliances with the leading families of Cheshire and Lancashire, until the death of Sir Rowland Stanley, of Storeton and Hooton, who died in 1613, and was buried at Eastham, being one of the oldest knights in England at the time of his decease. He was the father of Sir William Stanley, who attained an unenviable degree of celebrity by his conduct in the Netherlands, to mark his detestation of which, the old knight was a liberal contributor to the fund for repelling the Spanish Armada.\*

The venerable knight was succeeded by his great-grandson, then only seven years old. This son afterwards married Charlotte, daughter of Lord Viscount Molyneux, and was created a baronet, 17 June, 1661. He was the ancestor of the present, the eighth baronet, Sir William Thomas Massey Stanley, of Hooton, high sheriff of the county of Chester, 1845-6, who succeeded to the title and estates on the death of his father, Sir Thomas Massey Stanley, Bart., in 1842.

The ancient Hall of Hooton, a very large timber building, erected by license from Henry VII., was taken down in 1778. The present mansion, which is beautifully situated, on a gentle eminence near the eastern extremity of the hundred, commanding

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\* Sir William Stanley, eldest son of Sir Rowland, who married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Egerton, was a distinguished soldier, at the commencement of the seventeenth century.

Originally engaged in the service of the King of Spain, he was in 1578 employed in quelling a rebellion in Ireland, where he particularly distinguished himself in an attack on the lands of the Earl of Desmond, and the manner in which he sustained an attack of four hundred foot and thirty horse, "not having in his company six score persons to the uttermost." Notwithstanding a treaty made between the States General and Elizabeth, that whenever a vacancy occurred in the government of any town, it should be filled up by one of three persons who might be presented to the Commander-in-chief, Leicester at once appointed Sir William Stanley, Governor of Deventer, and placed under his command a garrison of about fourteen hundred Irish troops. Within a few weeks after taking the command he entered into negotiations to deliver the fortress into the hands of the Spaniards, in the service of whose monarch he was to have the same rank as he held in the English, and to retain the government of Deventer. After the fortress had been recovered by Prince Maurice, Stanley remained in Holland, arranging the communications of Philip with his native country, and pointing out those parts which were most vulnerable to the assaults of the Spanish Armada. The ministers of Elizabeth were not inattentive to these proceedings; numerous spies were employed to watch his conduct, and many of their observations, most minute in every particular, are recorded in the *Harl. MSS.* which also contain the examination of some of his servants, who were intercepted at Chester on their route into Wirral. After the defeat of the Armada, Sir William retired into the dominions of his new master, Philip II.; and, high in his favour, was at one time spoken of as the probable leader of an expedition into Ireland. He was finally appointed governor of Mecklin, where he terminated his mortal existence.

an extensive view of the river, and the entire coast of Cheshire and Lancashire, to the sea, was erected from designs by Wyatt, with stone from the Stanley quarries in Storeton. The grand circular stone staircase is universally admired.

Several ancient portraits, removed from the old house, are now at Hooton Hall, one of which is of Alan Silvestre, the ancestor of the Storetons, upon whom the office of chief forester of Wirral was conferred by Randal de Meschines, Earl of Chester, in 1120. (*See ante*, p. 192). Sir William Stanley is in possession of the ancient bugle



by which the bailiwick of the forest was held, on consideration of the forester either blowing or causing that horn to be blown at Gloverstone, in Chester, on the morning of every fair day, to indicate that the tolls or duties payable on all goods bought or sold in the city, or within sound of that horn, during the fair, belonged to the Earl and his tenants there.\*

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\* The horn which is preserved at Hooton is nearly seventeen inches long, nine inches and a half in circumference at the broad end, and two inches and a quarter at the tip, which is decorated with a brass rim. The colour varies; it is principally of a light or yellowish brown, spotted with shades of black or blue. A similar horn is in possession of the Arden family, who held Delamere forest under a tenure nearly corresponding to that of Wirral.



## NETHERPOOL.

The township of Netherpool is situated on the western bank of the Mersey, at a distance of about eight miles from Chester. It contains 449 acres, and is rated in the county books at £419 per annum. In 1801 it had only thirteen inhabitants, all of whom were resident at the only house in the township, Pool Hall. The last census gave a return of thirty-two persons.

From the situation of Pool, on the immediate shore of the river, which is here diverted from its previous course, and turns off at right angles towards Liverpool, it is peculiarly exposed to the violence of the stream. It has consequently suffered severely from the ravages of the waters, and large quantities of land have been washed away, as will be more particularly noticed when treating of the extra-parochial place on which stood Stanlaw Abbey.

Netherpool, with the adjacent township of Overpool, forms part of the possessions of William de Maldebeng, Baron of Nantwich, in the records of Domesday, soon after which, one of his adherents settled here, and assumed the name of Pulle, or Pul. His estates falling into the hands of three co-heiresses, they, about the year 1220, quit claimed the lands to William "le Hare," who, upon taking possession of the manor, adopted the local name, and became the founder of the families of the Poles of Devonshire, and the Pooles of Cheshire. The possessions of the latter were very considerable in this county, as from *Inq. p. m.* it appears that in the reign of Edward VI., they held lands in thirteen townships in Wirral, and others in Broxton, exclusive of those which were attached to the office of Seneschal of Birkenhead Priory. Their name frequently occurs in the annals of Cheshire, as holding the important offices of High Sheriff, Justiciary, and Chamberlain. Nor were their services confined to their native country. Randall de Pull fought in the van of the English army under the command of the Black Prince, and also at the battle of Poitiers, under the immediate orders of Lord Audley.\*

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\* The following extract from the annals of Liverpool refers to a younger son of Sir John Pool, *knt. temp. Richard II.* It is probable he was engaged in some trading pursuits in Liverpool, or more likely in privateering, as there are many records of the younger branches of families of the highest distinction having embarked money in vessels of that description. Sir Thos. Stanley, son of the Earl of Derby was very fortunate in these adventures. "1436. William Pulle of Wirral, gentleman, went to Bewsey near Warrington, with a great many servants, and forcibly carried off the Lady Isabel, widow of Sir John Boteler, late constable of Liverpool Castle, and most horribly ravished the said widow, carrying her into the most desolate parts of Wales." To such an extent did the crime of abduction prevail at this time, that it was found necessary to enact a special statute for the summary punishment of such offenders.

Sir Thomas Poole, Knight, Seneschal of Birkenhead at its dissolution, and Sheriff of Cheshire in the 19th Henry VIII., built Pool Hall, the old residence of the family being then in a state of great decay. This is a remarkably fine specimen of the domestic architecture of that period. The north and east fronts are built of gray stone, now covered with moss ; the other parts of the building are composed of timber and plaster, and are carried up in gables, in the usual style of the ancient Cheshire halls. The east front is lighted with large bay windows, and terminates at each end with an octagonal turret, of the same height as the centre gable. At one of these turrets is a large heavy embattled porch, approached by a flight of steps, and forming the entrance to a spacious hall, at the extremity of which was a very large apartment, lighted by bay windows, which has lately been divided into several large rooms, the occupier preferring domestic comfort to baronial splendour. Numerous family portraits, but without any inscriptions or initials to denote the parties they are intended to represent, enriched these rooms until within the last few years, when they were removed by order of the late Marquis of Westminster. Over the chimney piece in the great hall is the date 1574, which is presumed to refer to the completion of the entire edifice, the commencement of which seems to have been undertaken at an earlier period. The other rooms on this floor are appropriated to the purposes of the farm. The stairs are formed of solid masses of oak, continued to the upper apartments, one of which contains an oaken pannelling, which was very richly ornamented with heads of various members of the families in bas relief, with armorial bearings of the Talbots, Troutbecks, the Stanleys, and other families with whom the Pooles were allied by marriage. The arms of Poole, impaling those of Talbot, appear very prominent, and leave little doubt but that the house was built by Sir Thomas Poole, the seneschal of Birkenhead, who married a Talbot, and was lord of Poole from 30 to 38 Henry VIII.

The whole of this venerable pile presents one of the most interesting remains of which the county can boast, but although admirably situated, it seems to have been built with "that studied contempt which the taste of the day entertained for prospect," as the entire range of cow-houses and stables intercept a point of view whence the forest hills would appear, rising over the bend of the water, in a line of uncommon beauty and grandeur.

During the civil war Pool Hall was taken and pillaged by the Parliamentary forces under Sir William Moreton ; and in 1645 its owner, James Poole, died of wounds received at the siege of Chester, and was buried at Nantwich. The estates of his nephew and successor suffered greatly from the attachment of the family to the Royalist cause. At the restoration he was one of the Cheshire gentry selected by Charles II. for investiture with the intended order of the Royal Oak, an order of knighthood projected by the restored monarch, to perpetuate the loyalty of his faithful adherents, but which was wisely abandoned, under the apprehension that it would at the same time perpetuate those dissensions, which it were better to consign to oblivion. His son was created a baronet in 1677, and the baronetcy remained in the family of his descendants, until the death of the Rev. Sir Henry Poole, sixth baronet, in 1821.

In the autumn of 1844, a quantity of arms, swords, and pistols, were dug up in the grounds adjacent to the Hall, where, it is presumed, they were buried when it was taken two centuries since.

### OVERPOOL.

The township of Overpool, which lays about seven miles north from Chester, contains, 446 acres of land, valued in the county books at £398. Its population was, by the last census, returned at 96.

Overpool was included with Netherpool in the Domesday survey, and it then formed part of the possessions of the Barons of Nantwich. At an early period it became the property of the Monastery at Chester, and was held by the Abbot and Convent at the dissolution. After being retained by the Crown for some time, it was, in the 22nd Elizabeth, granted to William and John Glasior, subject to a fee-farm rent to the Dean and Chapter of Chester. Thomas Glasior, Esq., was lord of the manor so late as 1710, after which the manor passed to the Pooles ; upon the death of the Rev. Sir Henry Poole, it was purchased by the late Marquis of Westminster, by whom a court-leet and court-baron for this and the adjacent manor was occasionally held.

The village, if such it may be called, consists of a few poor huts and small farm houses, situated near the shore of the Mersey, on an almost impassable cross-road from Eastham into Broxton Hundred.

The baronetcy of Poole became extinct upon the demise of Sir Henry Poole, and as he had previously fixed his residence in Sussex, upon his marriage with a member of the Pelham family, these two townships with the other estates of the Pooles in this county, were sold to the late Marquis of Westminster.

### LITTLE SUTTON.

This township contains 1108 acres, with a population of 426 persons, and is valued at £1811. The return in 1801 exhibited 166 persons, occupying 24 houses.

The appearance of the village will not excite the curiosity of the traveller, for like many others in the neighbourhood, it merely forms a group of ordinary farm houses. There is a neat chapel in the village, and several houses of a better appearance have recently been erected. The principal part of its little trade was derived from the numerous stage coaches which, before the establishment of the Chester and Birkenhead Railway, daily passed through it ; but these are all withdrawn, and little remains to attract the eye, or relieve the gloom and monotony of the place.

The manor of Little Sutton was held by the Secular Monks of Chester so early as the reign of Edward the Confessor, and the record of Domesday proves that at its date the manor remained in their possession. The foundation charter of Hugh Lupus, to the Abbot and Convent of St. Werburgh, confirmed the manor to the new tenants of that monastery, and here afterwards was one of the four principal manor-houses which, by the charter of Earl Randal, the monks were to provide for the holding of their courts, and which Richard II. gave the abbot a license to fortify. After the dissolution it was granted to the Dean and Chapter, and passed with their other estates to Sir Richard Cotton, as appears by a *post mort. inq.* of the 3rd and 4th Philip and Mary, soon after which it was purchased by Sir Hugh Cholmondeley, and from him became the property of the Cholmondeleys of Vale Royal. In this family it continued until purchased, in 1798, by the father of the present possessor, Joseph White, Esq.

The old hall of Little Sutton was taken down about a century since: there are now no remains of the ancient manor-house, but it is presumed to have stood about a quarter of a mile from the present hall; as thirty years since, in digging the foundation of the farm house which now stands there, a rather singular discovery was made. An ancient cemetery, about forty-two feet square, was found by the workmen, containing many human bones and skulls; the enclosed space was divided into twenty-four

compartments by curiously wrought stone pillars, about three feet high, which supported a roof above, probably the floor of the domestic chapel. On the north side two steps were found leading to the room over the cemetery, which had been entered through a stone door frame, on which was an inscription, but "it is to be lamented," adds Mr. Ormerod, who visited Sutton soon after the discovery, "that the whole was barbarously destroyed, and the stones new cut and worked into the foundations of the farm house, before the inscription was seen by any one who could either decypher it, or describe the form of the letters."—ii. 237. There can be little doubt that the cemetery had been formed either by the secular canons, or their successors, the Benedictines of St. Werburgh.

### GREAT SUTTON.

This township contains 1057 acres, assessed at £1339, and its population, which in 1801 was 153, occupying 24 houses, was by the last census returned at 203. It consists of a few farm houses and the other ordinary small buildings of the country scattered on the side of the turnpike road between Chester and the ferries on the Mersey; this road intersects the township, as also does the Chester and Birkenhead Railway, whose directors have a station here.

In the Domesday survey Great Sutton appears to have been held in moieties between Robert Fitz-Hugh, Baron of Montalt, and the Bishop of Chester; but it is probable that the portion held by the former, merged, at an early period with that of the bishop, into the possession of the Abbot and Convent of St. Werburgh. It continued, with the adjacent manor of Little Sutton, to be held by them until the dissolution, since which the manor has passed, under the same title, to its present possessor, Joseph White, of Sutton Hall, Esq., who is lord of this manor, as also that of Little Sutton, and holds a court-leet for the same.

### WHITBY.

The township of Whitby is situated about six miles north of Chester, and is partly in the parish of Eastham, and partly in that of Stoak, or Stoke. Whitby contains 1153 acres, rated in the county books at £1219. Its population, by the last census, was returned at 831, and may probably now be about 1200.

The manor of Whitby, which is not mentioned in *Domesday*, was included in the barony of Nantwich, and was given, at the foundation of the monastery at Chester,

to the abbot and convent, in whose possession it remained until the dissolution. It was granted by Elizabeth, by letters patent, in the twenty-second year of her reign, to William Glasior, Esq., and John Glasior, gentleman; by whom it was sold in 1710, and after several alienations, became, by purchase, together with the entire township, the property of the late Marquis of Westminster, who held a court-leet for the manor.

The Chester and Ellesmere canal, which commences at the Tower wharf in Chester, and goes through the various townships in Wirral, of Caughall, Chorlton, Croughton, Stoke and Stanney,—pursuing its course through the Vale between the Hundreds of Wirral and Broxton, which is supposed to have been formerly filled with water,—enters the eastern corner of this township before its terminus in the Mersey, at a place generally called Ellesmere Port.

A few years since, there were on the site of this commodious and flourishing little town, only one public house, three small cottages, a mere shed as a substitute for a warehouse, and one set of locks; now it has about two hundred houses, many of them of neat aspect and commodious interior, a Church, several schools, a splendid and most ample range of warehouses, erected on arches, by which branches of the canal are brought under them, and above all, a magnificent floating dock, containing upwards of sixty thousand yards of water space.

The river approach to the port is by a good channel, which lays close to the shore, and has a depth of water amply sufficient for coasting vessels; two steam packets of forty horse power each, ply regularly between Whitby and Liverpool, leaving the latter at two hours before high water, and the locks as soon as the ebb tide commences, by which such vessels as do not use their sails are tugged up and down the river. Passengers are conveyed by the same conveyance. From the river, a walled entrance conducts to the outer or tidal bason from which are two sets of locks, one leading to the floating dock, appropriated to flats and barges, and the other into the large dock opened for coasters in Sept., 1843. The lock connected with this latter dock has fifteen feet water over the upper sill, so that vessels not drawing more, can enter and lay afloat there. The two docks are connected by three short cuts, one of which is uncovered to allow masted vessels to pass through; but the other two are arched over, and covered with three warehouses, branching at right angles from another of greater magnitude. This main warehouse is four stories in height, two hundred and twenty-five feet long, and fifty feet wide. There is a projection of the roof sufficient to shelter boats or flats

while loading or discharging. The lowest floor is level with the quays of the docks just described, and its third floor level with the canal, thereby effecting both economy and expedition in the transit in and out of the same. The three branch warehouses have two floors each, their lower portions forming the arched passages for vessels. The smaller dock is connected with the canal by two sets of locks, one for canal boats and the other for river flats. By these means boats and flats can approach and lay along either front of the principal warehouse, or any of the transverse warehouses, and discharge or receive their cargoes perfectly protected from the weather. The total surface of the floors of these warehouses is about sixty-seven thousand superficial feet. Attached to the docks are extensive quays, on parts of which sheds, covering an area of twenty-two thousand feet, and other conveniences, are now constructing and nearly completed. Besides these there is an enclosed building with two slips in which cargoes can be transferred under cover, from one vessel to another, without approaching the principal warehouses. There is also a dock for guaging boats, and one of Morton's patent slips, capable of hauling up vessels of 200 tons burthen, and connected with this is a range of shipbuilders' workshops.

The lighters are propelled on the canal by a small steam-boat, on the Archimedean principle. When first introduced, it was expected that the distance of nine miles might be accomplished in little more than an hour; but it is now found to require upwards of two; and as this canal is a dead level, without any locks, except at the extremities, none could be selected more favourable for this description of moving power. Had the anticipated speed of eight or ten miles per hour been obtained, great alteration would have taken place in the system of carriage by canal.

The company of proprietors of this navigation obtained their act of parliament in 1793, and the canal was cut under the superintendence of the late Mr. Telford, of Shrewsbury. The recent improvements have been completed by Mr. W. A. Provis, from designs by Mr. William Cubit, at an expense of upwards of £100,000.

The whole line, docks, warehouses, and the entire works, were leased, in 1843, from the proprietors, by Lord Francis Egerton, and are now worked under the direction of the Bridgewater trust.

A very neat stone church has been erected at Ellesmere Port, by the voluntary contributions of the Marquis of Westminster, the Rev. Henry Raikes, and others. By the unwearied exertions of the Chancellor Raikes, schools also, with a dwelling-house for the teachers, have just been completed.

## Parish of Heswall.



N the Parish of Heswall, situated on the bank of the Dee, are the townships of Heswall and Gayton, which together contain 1837 acres of land, valued in the county books at £1526. They are both situated on the shores of the Dee, to which they present a fertile tract of meadow land, which changes to a dreary moor as it advances inwards, and to the north-east rises into a wild and rocky heath, immediately under which stands the parish church.

### HESWALL, OTHERWISE HESWALL-CUM-OLDFIELD.

This township is situated about thirteen miles from Chester, and six from Birkenhead. In 1801 its population was 168; but the census of 1841 exhibits a return of 398. It contains 1167 acres, of the annual value of £868.

In the Domesday Book, Heswall, then called Eswelle, is noticed as being held by Robert de Rodelent, to whom were assigned the greater part of the lands on the eastern shores of the Dee. After the death of that powerful but turbulent baron, Heswall is not mentioned again until it became the property of Patrick de Haselwall, Sheriff of Cheshire in 1277, whose posterity remained in possession of the manor until the early part of the fourteenth century, when it was conveyed by the marriage of two sisters, co-heiresses, in moieties, to Robert de Calveley and William de Egerton. By the marriage of Katherine, the heiress of the Calveleys, to Arthur Davenport, who was slain at the battle of Shrewsbury, in 1403, their moiety of the manor became vested in his children, and it yet continues in the possession of their descendant, Edward Davies Davenport, Esq., of Calveley and of Capesthorne, recently High Sheriff of Cheshire. William de Egerton, who had obtained the other part of the manor, had a son, to whom a license was granted to build an oratory at the manor-house in 1398. It continued to be held by his successors until the year 1699, when it was sold



to William Whitmore, of Thurstaston ; and finally, upon the distribution of the Whitmore estates, under a decree in Chancery, in 1816, it became the property of James Okill, of Fron, in the county of Flint, Esq., to whom, at the same time, was awarded half of the adjacent hamlet of Oldfield. This place, which is a separate manor, was given by Patrick de Haselwall, on the marriage of his sister, in the reign of Henry III., to Guy de Provence, whose grandson assumed the name of Oldfield, and was the ancestor of the family of that name in Northwich Hundred.

The church of Heswall contains a nave and chancel, but without side aisles ; and it has a tower, which by frequent repairs with various materials, has now a curious appearance. Although by these repairs it has been entirely rebuilt, yet even the present structure is of considerable antiquity, and it may here be remarked that Heswall is the only church in Wirral, except Woodchurch, which has not belonged to some monastic institution. Not the slightest regard to the original style of architecture has been displayed in the repairs of the church, in which are several curious memorials of the Gleggs ; among these is one identified by its date to be erected to the memory of John Glegg, the second son of William Glegg, Esq., who was buried at Heswall, in January, 1619. On a large brass plate, placed within a niche, decorated with the arms and quarterings of that family, is engraved a figure in a long gown, with a beard and moustachios, and a sword suspended to his side, kneeling before a desk, and appended to this engraving are the following singular lines :—

“ I have no feelinge now of frende,  
Or frendshippes : 'tis all dead and gon :  
He heere inclosed ivste at his end  
Neare lefte a jott to any one.

Goe, hast' to him, sad soule of mine,  
Live ever where he sitts and singes ;  
Enter death's lists ; oh, neare decline ;  
Goe flie apase with angel's winges ;  
Get hense awaie, prisner to flesh and bone,  
Elisivm's the dwelling place where he is gone.

J. obiit JAN 3. 1619

Nearly opposite is a richly cut shield, bearing the arms of Whitmore and of Heswall, with the motto of the Whitmore family, “Either for ever,” which is supposed to have

been adopted from their frequently bearing either the arms of Heselwell, *Argent a Chief, Azure*, or of Whitmore, *Vert Checquy, Or*. Under the motto is suspended an oval medallion of white marble, representing a winged figure thrusting a lance into the mouth of a dragon, surrounded with a garter, bearing the inscription "*Sigillum Willielmi de Hesel Welle*." Two mural cenotaphs have just been erected, one in memory of Hugh Matthie, of Newhall in the adjacent township of Thornton, Esq., formerly an eminent merchant of Liverpool, and the other of his lady; they are of white marble, and remarkable for their elegant simplicity.

The advowson has always been attached to the manor, which being now divided, the right of presentation is alternately exercised by the respective owners. The Rev. Mark Coxon, A. M., at present holds the rectory, the emoluments of which were returned, in the *Clergy List* of 1841, at £294 per annum. The rector was entitled to a tithe of the Sunday's fishery, on all parts of the Dee opposite to his parish, as was the lord of Gayton to all that taken upon Friday opposite to his manor. The parsonage house, at present rebuilding, adjacent to the church, is well screened from the village by some woods which skirt the grounds. These have been laid out with great taste, and they extend to within a few fields breadth of the river.

A free school has recently been erected, and is supported by subscription, at which about sixty children are educated.

### GAYTON.

The township of Gayton contains 670 acres, of the annual value of £658. Its population, which in 1811 was 115, occupying 15 houses, by the late census amounted to the number of 149.

Gayton adjoins Heswall, and was included in the original grant to Robert de Rodelent. After his death it was resumed by the Earl, who conferred it upon Reginald de Tibermont, a Norman baron, who resigned it to the King, to enable him to increase the endowment of the Cistercian abbey of Vale Royal. The monks, dissatisfied with this distant manor, obtained permission to exchange it with Randle de Merton for other lands, and to facilitate the arrangement, Edward II. added the bailiwick of Caldý Hundred, the Earl's Eye, in Chester, and other property, to the acquirements of the new lord of Gayton. By the marriage of Guilbert Glegg, in 1330, to Joan, daughter

and heiress of Stephen, the last heir male of the Mertons, he became possessed of the manor and estate, which remained in his direct male descendants until 1758. In that year, on the marriage of John Baskervyle, of Old Withington, Esq., with Mary, heiress of Robert Glegg, of Grange, the property became vested in him, and he assumed the name of Glegg in lieu of that of Baskervyle.

Gayton Hall, the seat of the Gleggs, is a handsome building, facing the broad estuary of the Dee, and well sheltered with trees. Its hospitable doors were always open to the many travellers between this kingdom and Ireland, when Dawpool, Parkgate, and the western shores of Wirral were the usual and favourite places of embarkation to Ireland. Among its more distinguished visitors may be mentioned King William III., who having slept there in 1689, conferred the honour of knighthood upon its then occupier and owner, William Glegg, Esq. The out-buildings attached to the hall are very extensive, and were originally protected by a deep moat. The mansion is at present occupied by a gentleman of Liverpool.

Thomas Glegge, lord of Gayton, *temp.* Henry VI. and Edward IV., was an active supporter of the house of York, during the wars of the roses. In the last year of Henry's reign, he, together with Henry Brombrugh, intercepted at Gayton, stores and money to the amount of twenty thousand marks, coming for the use of the king; upon which a warrant was issued by Henry, directing the High Sheriff, Sir William Stanley, and others to arrest him. He was taken, and confined in Chester Castle, until subsequently pardoned in the 8th Edward IV. It seems singular that this pardon should have been delayed so long after the accession to the throne of the head of that party for which he had been so warm a partizan.

## Parish of Neston.



ALL the parish of Neston is situated in the eastern division of the hundred, and far exceeds in extent any in Wirral. It was formerly divided into four parts, of which the township of Great Neston was considered one; Leighton, Thornton Hough, and Raby formed the second; Willaston and Ledsham the third; Nesse and Little Nesse the fourth; the whole extending over upwards of 9000 acres, valued in the county books at £13,600 per annum.

The flatness of the country and the prevalence of sea breezes, which prevent the growth of timber, have given the parish a very naked and cheerless appearance, which may in some measure account for its having been for centuries deserted by nearly all its principal landowners.

### GREAT NESTON.

The township of Great Neston contains 1303 acres, and is valued at £4216 per annum. The number of inhabitants in 1841 was returned at 1212.

The record of Domesday states that this township was then held in three parts, one of which the monks of St. Werburgh had been allowed to retain. One of the other two had been granted to William Fitz-Nigel, baron of Halton, lessee of that which belonged to the monks: the third was held by Robert the Cook. Early in the reign of Stephen, the second baron of Halton obtained that portion which belonged to the monastery in exchange for Raby, and a subsequent arrangement put him in possession of the entire manor. Shortly after this exchange, the manor and church of Neston passed from the barons of Halton to Robert de Montalt, the manor being held by the service of finding a juror for the county court and the court of Wilaveston Hundred. Upon the accession of Edward III., Robert, the last Baron of Montalt, having no children, presented this manor to the Queen Isabella, with remainder to her royal husband, who, twelve years afterwards, confirmed an agreement made between the

Queen and William de Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, whereby Neston became the property of the latter. It was forfeited by the treason of his nephew, John, Earl of Salisbury and Lord of Neston, for which he was executed in the first year of Henry IV. who granted these estates, six years afterwards, to his son the Prince of Wales. But the monarch's right to dispose of them was disputed by one John Hertcombe, who boldly claimed that, as the sole survivor of four trustees, to whom the late Earl had granted his estates in fee, before he was attainted, he alone was entitled to them. After considerable litigation Hertcombe finally prevailed, and the manor of Neston, with other property, was recovered by the Salisburys, whose heiress married, in 1454 Sir Thomas Stanley, afterwards Lord Stanley. Their descendants remained in possession, for several generations. About the latter end of the sixteenth century, it was alienated by William, Earl of Derby, in some gaming transaction,\* to William Whitmore, of Leighton, Esq., whose heiress conveyed it in marriage to the second son of Lord Viscount Savage. Bridget, the sole heiress of their only son, married Sir Thomas Mostyn, of Mostyn, Bart., ancestor of the present proprietor, the Hon. Edward Mostyn Lloyd Mostyn, of Mostyn, eldest son and heir apparent of the Lord Mostyn, of Pengwern, in the county of Denbigh.

The church of Neston, which was in existence before the conquest, was given by Ralph de Montalt to the Abbot and convent of St. Werburgh, by a charter, which being confirmed by Richard, Bishop of Lichfield, must have borne date previously to 1182. With them it remained until the dissolution, when the impropriation was granted to the newly formed see of Chester. With the greater part of their possessions, it was obtained by the Cottons from the Dean and Chapter, but it was ultimately restored to them, and the presentation to the vicarage which yet continues in their hands is usually conferred on one of the minor canons. The present incumbent is the Rev. Archdeacon Clarke, vicar of Eastham, who was instituted to Neston in 1827. The value of the living was, in 1841, returned at £535. The Rev. Wright Willett officiates as curate for the vicar, who resides at Eastham. The present church is a handsome and spacious edifice, of considerable antiquity, dedicated to the Virgin Mary and St. Helen. It contains a nave, chancel, and side aisles, formerly terminating in small chapels, and it has a tower. The nave and chancel are now united. The latter was formerly separated from the side aisles by four pointed arches, springing from cylindrical

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\* See *Dr. Williamson's VILLAGE CEST.*, as communicated by William Whitmore of Thurstanston, Esq., A. D. 1710.

octagonal pillars on both sides; but several of the pillars have been removed, and only the first arch remains complete on both sides. The font is an extremely elegant piece of workmanship, erected rather more than four hundred years since. The base is octangular, with a slender shaft, and basin corresponding in form and diameter with the lower part of the base. The lower part of the shaft is ornamented with niches and trefoils, and each side of the basin with pannelling, containing quatrefoils and other ornaments of the early part of the fifteenth century. The exterior of the church is a mixture of various styles and ages, indicating its erection about the same period as the font. The tower is supposed to have been rebuilt in 1697, as that date appears cut on a stone. Some remains of a roodloft, over the ancient partition, between the nave and chancel, about forty feet eastward of the tower, are visible on the third pillar on the west end of the south side. Tradition says the bells were brought from Wales; but there are no inscriptions to identify them, nor do the registers supply the deficiency.

Mr. Ormerod gives the names of three rectors of Neston, between 1182 and 1210, and of fourteen vicars, commencing with Henry of Bromburgh, prior to 1336; but he was unable to render it more complete, as the episcopal registers of both Chester and Lichfield are equally defective as to this parish; nor is this remedied by the parochial registry, which only commences in 1700.

There are no monuments particularly interesting in the church or churchyard, although there are many which confirm the almost proverbial salubrity of the climate of this part of Wirral. Among others is the tombstone of John Hancock, of Ledsham, who died 4th December, 1775, at the age of 112 years. The same stone records the death of "John Hancock, his son, who died 5th August, 1781, aged 70 years." The grave of the old man's wife, in another part of the churchyard, mentions her decease in "1799, aged 73 years." She must therefore have been sixty-three years younger than her husband. At the age of 104, he daily walked to a public-house half a mile from his residence. In another part of the churchyard are the remains of a farmer and his wife, of the name of Broughton, respectively aged 106 and 100.

There is now a free school in Great Neston, although that mentioned by Bishop Gastrell, having no endowment, has ceased to exist. Among many benefactions to the poor, may be mentioned £500 from Thomas Hayes of Chester, Esq., M.D., the interest of which, with other smaller sums, is regularly distributed, and a portion has been laid out in the erection of a small gallery in the church.

Neston has a market for provisions and butchers' meat every Friday, and three annual fairs, against which, in the records of the corporation of Chester, there is a petition to the King, complaining that they interfered with the tolls of the city. They are now held without charter or manorial claims, from the court-leet and court-baron which is annually held for the manor.

In Neston and the immediate neighbourhood are several large and handsome houses. Ashfield, which is a separate manor of itself, the property of John Winder Lyon Winder, Esq., of Vaynor Park in Montgomeryshire,—of which county he is now (1845) High Sheriff, having succeeded to several townships on the demise of his brother, the late Joseph Hayes Lyon, Esq.,—is one of the finest modern mansions in this part of the county, with extensive grounds, and well planted with flourishing trees.

Partly in this township, and partly in Leighton, at about the distance of half a mile from Neston village, on the banks of the river Dee, is the hamlet of Parkgate, a place of some celebrity in Cheshire for sea bathing. It consists of a long range of irregularly built houses, which all face the river, and command a magnificent panoramic view of the opposite coast of Wales. Until within the last forty years, it was the principal place of embarkation for Ireland; and was much resorted to by numerous packets and traders, which could then anchor close to the shore. The tide having so far receded that no vessel of burthen can approach within a considerable distance, and a large bank of sand occupying the ancient channel of the river, Parkgate is now quite neglected as a packet station. The custom-house still remains, as also the ruins of a pottery. A raised terrace, above the rise of the tide, in front of the houses, forms an agreeable promenade, and is much frequented by the numerous visitors in summer: there are several hotels, among which is the Mostyn Arms, a spacious establishment, replete with every accommodation. At this hotel, the county business for the western division of Wirral has been transacted since its removal, within the last few years, from Neston.

### LEDSHAM.

The township of Ledsham contains 782 acres, valued at £783; and its population was at the late census returned at 81 persons. It is situated at the extremity of the parish, about five miles from Chester.

The manor of Ledsham, called in Domesday book *Levetsham*, is therein stated

to have been held by Walter de Vernon, the grantee of the neighbouring township of Nesse, both of which had belonged to the Saxon Erniott. The earlier records of this township are very defective; no subsequent notice occurring until the reign of Richard II., when it was held by the Gerards of Kingsley and Bryn from the Earl of Shrewsbury by military service. In the reign of Elizabeth, a portion of the estates which had descended from the Gerards of Kingsley to those of Lancashire, was sold to William Massey of Puddington, for one thousand marks; and on the termination of the male line of the Masseys in 1715, it passed by will to Sir Thomas Stanley of Hooton; and afterwards descended, with the other estates of the Massey family, to the late Sir Thomas Stanley Massey Stanley, Bart., by whom it was bequeathed to his second son, Rowland Errington of Newnham Paddocks, Esq.

#### WILLASTON.

The ancient township of Willaston contains 1875 acres, valued at £1928; and by the late census, had 332 inhabitants. In 1801, the population consisted of 196 persons, occupying 32 houses.

It is a most singular circumstance, that Willaston is not mentioned in Domesday book, although it was of sufficient importance to confer its name upon the Hundred, then called Wilaveston. Its present name first appears in 1230, in a deed of assignment by way of dower, whereby it is conveyed, with the manors of Upton and Frankby, by Fulco de Orreby, for the use of his mother. By the marriage of her granddaughter, it passed to the Mainwarings of Warmincham, and afterwards to the Trussels, upon the marriage of whose heiress with John Vere, fifth Earl of Oxford, the manor was conveyed to him; and by his grandson, Edward, Earl Oxford, was, in the reign of Elizabeth, sold in twenty-four severalties. Of these, the greater part were purchased by the Bennetts, a family of the highest respectability in this neighbourhood and in Chester, who have held land in Willaston since before the sales by the Veres.\*

The village is situated about the centre of the Hundred; three miles from Neston, and ten from Chester. It contains several excellent and substantial farm houses; and is surrounded by timber of a much larger growth than is found in most parts of the Hundred, which greatly favours its appearance.

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\* The numerous Bennetts of Neston and Shotwick, and also those of Barnston, Greasby, Newton, and Saughall, are all branches of this family.



Willaston Hall, an ancient brick building, was erected by the Bennetts in 1558, and continued their residence to a very late period. It has a large front, with three gable ends rising to the roof, in the centre one of which, is a large porch joining the entrance; the whole is three stories high; but the rooms, which are lighted by bay windows, are very low.

### LEIGHTON.

The township of Leighton, which is situated on the banks of the Dee, about twelve miles from Chester, contains 613 acres, valued at £1138; by the census of 1841 it had 374 inhabitants.

In the Domesday survey, it was included among the extensive possessions of Robert de Rodelent; and after his death, it was given to the barons of Montalt, under whom it was held by William de Leighton, 6th Edward II. His grand-daughter and heiress conveyed the manors of Thornton and Leighton in marriage to Richard del Hoghe, or de la Hough, and from their descendants, the former obtained the name of Thornton Hough.

The family of the Houghs continued here in uninterrupted possession, until the death of William Hough, 27 Elizabeth, who left one only daughter and heiress, Alice, married to William, second son of Thomas Whitmore, of Thurstanston, Esq. From the inquisition at the death of her father, she appears to have succeeded to several manors, and property in eleven townships, in Wirral. By the marriage of Bridget, grand-daughter of this William Whitmore and Alice his wife, to her second husband, the son of Viscount Savage, of Rocksavage, the property was conveyed to that family; and by the subsequent marriage of another Bridget, grand-daughter of the one named above, to Sir Thomas Mostyn, as mentioned under Neston, the estates and manor of Leighton were, in a similar manner, conveyed to him, and they remain the property of his descendant, the Hon. E. M. Lloyd Mostyn.

The fisheries at Leighton were formerly considerable, but are now much neglected, and it enjoyed some trifling trade previously to the alteration in the channel of the Dee. From that part of Parkgate which is within this township, passage boats to the opposite shores of Flintshire ply every day, their arrival and departure being regulated by the time of high water. A Wesleyan Chapel and several new buildings have recently been erected on the shores of the Dee.

## LITTLE NESTON, OR NESTON-CUM-HARGREAVE.

The township of Little Neston contains 1307 acres, valued at £1631. The number of its inhabitants by the late census was 438; in 1801 there were 254, occupying 53 houses. In these numbers are included those of the little hamlet and manor of Hargreave, which are separately noticed in Domesday survey, when they were both held by Robert the Cook. After various alienations, they were divided into five parts, the larger portion of which became the property of the Earl of Shrewsbury, as the descendant of the Troutbecks; the remaining two-fifths are the property of John Cottingham, of Neston, Esq.,\* fifth in descent from Thomas, brother and heir of John Cottingham, Esq., who, in 1618, purchased the same from Sir Charles Mordaunt, of Oakley, in the county of Bedford, Knight.

The court-leet and court-baron for both manors are now alternately held by the Earl of Shrewsbury and Mr. Cottingham, the latter of whom has some extensive collieries in this township, running, like those of Denwall, under the Dee. Much of the land is very bad, with miserable roads, without a single tree to shelter the passenger from the severity of the winds. A Roman Catholic Chapel was erected in 1841, it is a neat stone building, with a school attached.

## THORNTON HOUGH.

The township of Thornton Mayeu, or Mayeo, contains 1375 acres of land, of the assessable value of £1233, and a population of 213 persons. In 1801 it had 165 inhabitants, occupying 36 houses.

Thornton, in Domesday *Torintone*, was part of the extensive possessions of Robert de Rodelent, and in the reign of Edward II. was held by one Roger de Thornton, whose only daughter became the wife of Richard del Hoghe, or de la Hough, whose name was afterwards added to Thornton. The manor had been held by the family for twelve successive generations, when it passed, with that of Leighton, through the families of the Whitmores and the Savages, to the Mostyns, and is at present held by the Hon. Edward M. Lloyd Mostyn.

Thornton Grange, which most probably belonged at an early period to the abbot

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\* Lately Recorder of Chester, and now Stipendiary Magistrate of Union Hall, London.

and convent of St. Werburgh, when they possessed the adjacent township of Raby, has descended, with that manor, through the Hulses and the Troutbecks, to the Earl of Shrewsbury.

The ancient and extensive hall of the Leightons has been taken down, and some farm buildings erected on its site with the materials. Most of the land is of very indifferent quality, which indeed may be said of the whole parish. The entire township abounds with rock.

The village is built on a slight elevation, the only street of which is cut through the solid sandstone, presenting a very unpleasant appearance, and though it possesses a few tolerably good houses, the greater portion are of a very inferior description.

#### RABY.

The township of Raby contains 1106 acres, assessed in the county books at £1220, and has a population of 185 persons. In 1801 the number of its inhabitants was 131, occupying 22 houses.

At the time of the Domesday survey, Raby was divided into two parts, which were severally held by the church of St. Werburgh, and by William the Norman baron of Halton, who afterwards exchanged it, for other lands, with the monks, who thereby became possessed of the whole of Raby. They did not long retain the manor, although some of the lands were held by them in the 31st Edward III., when the abbot claimed the exercise of manorial rights over his tenants of Raby. But the early connection of this township with the once important office of Serjeancy of the Bridge Gate—the great entrance for the Welsh—at Chester, has given it a greater degree of interest than it derives from the monastic settlement that was probably made, at a very remote period, here and at Thornton Grange.

Randal, the first of that name, Earl of Chester, confirmed by deed to Poyns, a servant of his countess, “certain lands between the bridge and the castle, at Chester, with a house to be held *by the service attached to those lands*, which had been previously given by his countess to Poyns.” These lands and services devolved upon Richard Bagot ; but in consequence of his “inability to perform the service of the gate,\* from

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\* The duties of the office are well defined by several inquisitions, as also the emoluments. The Serjeant was bound to find bars, locks, and keys for the bridge gate, the horse gate, and the *Shaggat*, now the Ship gate, and men to watch at the gates, and to open and shut them. He was also to furnish the Earl's household with coleworts from Michaelmas until Lent, and with leeks during the forty days of Lent ; and was further charged with the custody of the Gardens at the Castle, for

poverty and impotence, particularly in war time," they were transferred, in a full court of the city of Chester, in 1269-70, before Thomas Boulton, then Justiciary, to Philip the Clerk. This Philip was succeeded by his next of kin, Robert de Raby, as appears by a charter, 9th Edward II., from the abbot of Dieulacres, confirming the serjeancy to him. Of his only grand-daughter and heiress nothing is known, beyond her assignment of the offices and rents to trustees, to re-enfeoff her or her assigns with the same, when required, and a chasm occurs in the descent of the serjeancy, and the manor of Raby, which neither the records of the exchequer of Chester, the evidences of the Earl of Shrewsbury, or the untiring researches of Mr. Ormerod can supply. The next mention of this manor is in the reign of Henry V., when it occurs in a *post mort.* inquisition, as having been held by the Hulses or Holes. They were succeeded by the Troutbecks, whose heiress married John Talbot, of Albrighton, in the county of Salop, Esq., from whom Raby and several adjacent townships have descended to his successor, the present Earl of Shrewsbury. A court-leet and court-baron is held at Raby by the Earl, for this manor, and those of Oxton, Brimstage, Thingwell, Thornton, and Barnston.

## NESSE.

The township of Nesse is situated on the eastern shore of the Dee, ten miles from Chester. It contains 852 acres valued in the county books at £1473, and by the late census had a population of 485 persons.

Nesse is mentioned in the Domesday survey as being a part of the possessions of Walter de Vernon, brother of the Norman baron of Shipbrook, to whose estates he afterwards succeeded. By an inquisition on the death of Lawrence de Dutton, *temp.* Richard II. it was found to have been held by the Duttons under the King, as Earl of Chester, *in capite* by military service. Upon the marriage of the heiress of that family, 7th James I., to the heir of Thomas, Lord Gerard, Nesse became the property of the Gerards of Gerards Bromley, and in 1668 was purchased from them by the Masseys of Puddington. By the will of the late Sir Thomas S. Massey Stanley, Nesse was bequeathed to his second son, Rowland Errington, Esq. as was also the adjacent

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which he was entitled to the fruit of a tree described as the "Restyngtre," and all apples remaining on the trees after the first shaking; various rent charges, a daily payment at the castle of three pence, the tolls of the gates, the profits of the fishery, and the ferriage of a boat on the Dee, were among the other emoluments of the Serjeant, who had also a house for his residence on the west side of "Brugge Street."

township of Ledsham. Mr. Errington holds a court-leet for these two townships, and it is a singular circumstance that after the lapse of many centuries they should again be included in the same court and vested in the same proprietor. In the Domesday survey, Nesse and Ledsham are named as having previously been the property of the same Saxon; both were then held by the same Norman, whose estates at his death were much divided, and the two townships passed into different hands, yet now eight hundred years afterwards, both are again united in the same individual.

In this township are very extensive collieries, situated on the margin of the river, under which the veins of coal run for a considerable distance towards the opposite coast of Flintshire. They have yielded an immense supply of coal since their being first opened.

These collieries principally belong to Charles Stanley, of Denhall, Esq., uncle to the present baronet of Hooton. The coals in these pits were formerly brought to the shaft by two canals, each extending more than a mile under the Dee; one of them at a depth of sixty yards below the surface, the other at ninety-four yards. During the forty years they were in use, many hundred thousand tons of coals were conveyed along them, in boats each carrying four baskets containing four hundred-weight each. Four, or even five of these boats being attached together, they were forced along by the boatman, who, laying upon his back on the coals, "spurred" with his feet against the roof of the canal, and thus propelled the boat. This mode was found so laborious, notwithstanding they could not acquire a greater speed than a mile per hour, that, about twenty-three years since, it was abandoned, and the collieries that have subsequently been opened have railways extending under the Dee, and upon which carriages with the coal are drawn by ponies.

The village is one of the most miserable in the hundred, consisting of a mere mass of hovels inhabited by the colliers; the greater part of the land is of very inferior quality and much of it absolutely worthless.

Denhall House, the seat of Charles Stanley, Esq. the principal proprietor of the collieries in that neighbourhood, is situated on the banks of the river; the grounds attached to the house constitute a pleasing exception to the bleak and dreary prospect of the other parts of the township.

There was formerly an institution called "The Hospital of Denwall," at the hamlet of Denwall in this township, which was endowed with the tithes of Burton, and

continued to hold them until 1485, when the hospital and its revenues were conferred on the hospital of St. John, which was rebuilt and endowed by Bishop Smith of Lichfield.\* The hospital at Denhall has long since been demolished, not a vestige of it remains ; but its revenues continue to form part of the income of the see of Lichfield.

The family of Cottingham, originally from Cottingham in Yorkshire, settled in this parish in the early part of the thirteenth century, and their name is to be found in the list of those Cheshire gentry who paid the penalty of their lives for their loyalty to their sovereign, when Richard II., was taken prisoner at Flint on his return from Ireland, by Henry of Lancaster, afterwards Henry IV. It also occurs on the roll of the men of Cheshire who signalized themselves on the field of Agincourt. In the beginning of the fifteenth century the Cottinghams appear to have possessed considerable property in the neighbourhood, to which, in 1618, they made some additions and purchased the manor of Little Neston, the entirety of which was held by them in direct descent to a very recent period.

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\* See Burton (*ante*, p. 215,) where it is stated that Burton was given by the king, at the request of the bishop, which accords with almost every writer on Lichfield and the ecclesiastical affairs of the diocese ; yet Archdeacon Churton quotes from the Registry, "the hospital belonged to the bishop's patronage, and was his gift ; the business was transacted in the Episcopal Court in Lichfield Cathedral, and after three days of examining witnesses and receiving depositions, was concluded on Tuesday the 8th January 1495, and confirmed by the chapter the next day." But as a royal license would be required for the alienation, the discrepancy is easily reconciled.

## Parish of Overchurch.



THE parish of Overchurch, which contains only one township, that of Upton, extends over 917 acres, valued in the county books at £1505 per annum. The population, which in 1801 consisted of 141 persons, occupying 26 houses, was by the last census returned at 237.

In the Domesday survey the manor of Upton is noticed as part of the possessions of William de Malbedeng, Baron of Nantwich, from whom it passed to the family of the Praers and the Orrebies, by one of whom, in 1230, a settlement was made of this manor, together with Willaston, in favour of his mother. In 1310, upon the marriage of the daughter of Sir John Arderne, who possessed the manor in right of his mother, it was given to her husband, Baldwin Bold, of Bold, in the county of Lancaster, in the family of whose descendants it remained for six generations. During the latter part of their holding Upton, many of the estates were alienated. The hall and the manor, were bought from them, in 1614, by Robert Davies, by whom they were successively sold to William and to Charles, Earls of Derby. After several purchases these became vested in the Cunliffes, and by the late Sir Foster Cunliffe, Bart., they were sold to Thomas Clarke, Esq., an eminent merchant of Liverpool. The manor was afterward bought from Mr. Clarke by John Webster, of Poulton-cum-Seacombe, Esq., and it is now the property of his son, William Webster, of Upton Hall, Esq., who, as manorial lord, holds a court-leet and court-baron, the jurisdiction of the leet extending over the township of Frankby.

The rectory of Overchurch, which formed part of the original revenues of the Convent of St. Werburgh, at Chester, was granted, at the dissolution, to the dean and chapter of the new diocese, from whom it was wrested by the Cottons. It afterwards became the property of the Stanleys, of Hooton, and the present lay-rector is Sir William T. Massey Stanley, Bart., who receives the tithes, which have been commuted. This family also possessed the right of appointing the curate, which is now held by Mr.

Webster, he having purchased it from the Rev. Robert M. Fielden, who obtained it under the same title as Bebington, from the late Rev. Roger Jacson. The living is a perpetual curacy, augmented by Queen Anne's bounty, and stated in the clergy list to be of the annual value of £52 including a contribution of £12 from the rector of Bebington. The present incumbent is the Rev. Offley Crewe.

The ancient parish church stood about three quarters of a mile from the village of Upton, and is described as having had pointed arches of peculiar elegance, richly decorated with chevrons and Saxon mouldings. It was for many years in a progressive state of decay. In 1709, the steeple having been injured in a storm, and the body of the church previously much dilapidated, the parishioners petitioned for a license to sell two of the bells, to repair the church, alleging it was in a most ruinous condition, and that there were only fourteen families in the parish whose circumstances enabled them to contribute to its renovation.\* A century afterwards, in 1813, after a survey by Bishop Law, it was taken down and a smaller, but neat and sufficiently commodious building, was erected by a voluntary rate, in the best and most commanding situation in the township. The cemetery attached to the old church yard yet remains.

Upton, though now only a small village, was formerly considered the metropolis of the lower mediety of Wirral, and had two annual fairs of considerable importance, and also a weekly market that was discontinued in 1620, the village having been recently almost entirely rebuilt, contains several good houses, among which may be particularly mentioned Upton Hall, a spacious edifice erected by the late Mr. Webster, whose son is one of the most active and successful patrons of agriculture in the county. It stands on a slight elevation, commanding the village, and appears to occupy the site of a more ancient mansion. The surrounding country is very bare of foliage, but the scenery is enlivened by the distant prospect of the sea and the numerous vessels trading to and from the port of Liverpool.

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\* Of these the only remaining are the Lowes, a family which has been settled in Upton for several hundred years.



## Parish of Shotwick.



THE Parish of Shotwick comprehends the townships of Shotwick, Capenhurst, Great Saughall, Little Saughall, and Woodbank, which contain 3441 acres, valued in the county books at £3920. In 1801 the parish contained 106 houses, occupied by 485 persons : the late census gave a return of 868 inhabitants.

### SHOTWICK.

In the township of Shotwick are 537 acres, of the annual value of £579, and its population, in 1841, was returned at 112. The name of the parish is evidently derived from that of the township, in which were formerly salt works of considerable importance, noticed by Leland, as being in existence at the time of his itinerary. In the Domesday Book it occurs as *Sotowicke*, and was then held by the secular canons of St. Werburgh ; after their expulsion it was granted by Earl Lupus to the Benedictine monks, by whom they were succeeded.

The manor was held under the abbots by a family that bore the local name, until the reign of Edward I., when it was conveyed to the Hockenhalls of Hockenhall, one of whom, in a plea to a *quo warranto*, temp. 15 Henry VII., claimed to have a free fishery in the Dee, opposite Shotwick, Churchtown, and Woodbank, excepting “whalle, sturgeon, and Thorlehede,” which were to be carried to Chester Castle, for the use of the Earl and his household. The Hockenhalls continued to hold the manor until 1715, when the estate, being mortgaged by them, was sold, and finally it passed to John Nevitt Bennett, of Chester, Esq., whose representative Samuel Nevitt Bennett, Esq., is the present proprietor of the manor, and owns the entire township.

Shotwick church, dedicated to St. Michael, stands on the immediate banks of the Dee Marshes, which are yet partially covered at high spring tides. It consists of a nave, chancel, north aisle, and a small chapel on the eastern end, with a large handsome

embattled tower. The chancel is divided from the chapel by two low and obtuse arches, and the north aisle is separated from the body of the church by four acutely pointed arches. The greater part of the church was rebuilt in the early part of the fifteenth century; but the south entrance is of much greater antiquity, apparently coeval with the conquest. It has a circular head, ornamented with three ranges of quatrefoil, chevron, and billetty mouldings. The external part of the tower, which is very large in proportion to the church, has been profusely decorated; but the soft stone has in most instances yielded to the effects of time, and it is with difficulty the ornaments can now be distinguished. The windows of the chancel and chapel, which have recently been renewed, yet contain a few remains of highly coloured glass. Every pane appears to have been stained with *fleurs de lis* and other armorial flowers, amid which the letters *T. A.* frequently occur, and are presumed to refer to Thomas Yeadsley, Abbot of Chester from 1418 to 1434, in whose abbacy many repairs were effected in the church. The living is a perpetual curacy, in the patronage of the dean and chapter of Chester, and returned in the *Clergy List* of 1841, at the annual value of £88. The present incumbent is the Rev. James Cottingham. There are no monuments of the least interest in the church, or in the churchyard, which is very extensive, and almost reached by the waters of the Dee at high tides.\*

The village, or as it is sometimes called, Shotwick Churchtown, is six miles from Chester, at the commencement of the road over the reclaimed lands of the Dee to the Queen's Ferry, from which it is distant two miles. It presents no claim to notice. The Hall, formerly the seat of the Hockenhalls, is a building of comparatively modern erection. The site of the more ancient residence of that once "knightlye familie" may yet be traced.†

The registry of the parish shows, by the baptism of their children in 1734, that the Hockenhalls continued to reside in or about the neighbourhood at that period; but

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\* This church was appropriated by the Abbot of Chester, in 1240, to supply the increased expenses of the kitchen, in consequence of the addition of six monks.

† The celebrated Dr. Samuel Clarke was curate of Shotwick in the middle of the seventeenth century. He was maintained here by voluntary subscription; and he drew enormous crowds, by his preachings and conferences, to this secluded village. "He was, however, obliged to leave in consequence of a prosecution in the ecclesiastical courts." In 1660 he was deputed by the ministers of London to present an address against re-ordination, and the use of surplices in colleges, and was appointed a commissioner for the reformation of the Book of Common Prayer. He closed a life of piety, after having been for many years ejected for nonconformity, in 1683. Among his numerous and valuable works may be mentioned the first English collection of Biography, entitled "*The Marrow of Ecclesiastical History*, 1654.

the family is believed to be extinct, having terminated in a female who received parochial assistance in her latter days.\*

### CAPENHURST.

The inland township of Capenhurst is situated about eight miles from Chester, between the turnpike roads which lead from that city to the Mersey and to Parkgate, and which are connected by an excellent cross road that runs through the village. It contains 1150 acres, of the annual value of £888, and at the late census had 154 inhabitants.

Capenhurst is mentioned in Domesday Book, as having been granted to the Barons of Halton, and in the reign of Edward I. it was held under them by Hugh de Bernston, who sold it to a family that assumed the local name. By the marriage of the coheiresses of the Capenhursts, one-third of the manor was conveyed to James de Pull or Poole, of Pool, and the other two-thirds to the ancestors of the present Marquis of Cholmondeley. From the representatives of these families the estate was purchased by the father of Richard Richardson of Capenhurst Hall, Esq., at present the sole proprietor of the township, for which he occasionally holds a court-leet and court-baron. The old hall of the Capenhursts, a large building of wood and plaster, erected about the beginning of the seventeenth century, has been taken down and a farm house now occupies its site. The mansion is a substantial and well-built fabric of brick, in the centre of grounds that have been judiciously laid out with extensive and well sheltered plantations, affording a pleasing variety to a country otherwise flat and uninteresting.

### GREAT SAUGHALL.

This township situate between those of Little Saughall and Shotwick park, about four miles from Chester, contains 1122 acres, of the annual value of £1580, and by the late census it had 480 inhabitants.

Previously to the conquest it was held by the secular canons of St. Werburgh, whose successors were only allowed to retain one-third; the other parts were soon afterward

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\* This is stated by Mr. Ormerod and others, and it also agrees with the opinion or remembrance of the older inhabitants; but there have latterly been several enquiries into the registers of this and the adjacent parishes, relative to the family; and even graves have been opened to endeavour to decypher the coffin plates, from whence it is inferred that some property may have been discovered appertaining to their heirs.

assigned to the keeper of the Earl's Park and Castle of Shotwick, together with the manor and desmesnes of Little Saughall, "the park and parker's howse," and a fishery on the Dee. In 1665 these manors and estates were purchased from the crown by Sir Thomas Wilbraham, of Woodhey, Knt., from whom they passed by purchase to the Salusbury's of Flintshire, and were in 1734 bequeathed by Salusbury Lloyd, of Ledbroke, Esq., to his son-in-law, Thomas Brereton, who thereupon assumed the name of Salusbury. His only son Owen Brereton Salusbury, Esq., who was Recorder of Liverpool for the long period of fifty-five years, (from 1742 to 1795,) dying without children, devised his estates to his cousin, Charles Trelawney, Esq., in the possession of which he was succeeded by his son Henry Brereton Trelawney, Esq., of Hertford Street, May Fair, London, the present proprietor.

There are a few very good detached houses in this township, but the village presents the ordinary collection of poor and ill-arranged cottages.\*

### LITTLE SAUGHALL.

The township of Little Saughall, which contains 442 acres, valued at £665, had at the late census 47 inhabitants.

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\* Great Saughall was the birthplace and residence of Mrs. Mary Davies, whose misfortunes are fully detailed in a pamphlet entitled, "*A BRIEF NARRATIVE of a strange and wonderful old Woman, that hath a pair of horns growing upon her head; giving an account of how they have several times, after being shed, grown again; declaring the place of her birth, her education, and her conversation, with the first occasion of their growth, the time of their continuance, and where she is now to be seen, namely, at the Sign of the Swanne, near Charing Cross.*"

You that love wonders to behold,  
Here you may of a wonder rede;  
The strangest that was ever seen or told,  
A Woman with Horns upon her Head!

London: Printed by T. S., 1676." She is described therein as then being 76 years old, and following the profession of an *accoucheuse*, having been a widow 35 years. She had had an excrescence on the head for 32 years, supposed to have been occasioned by wearing a tight hat for several years, and when she was 60 years old "it changed into horns, in shew and substance much like rams' horns, solid and wrinkled, but sadly grieving the old woman, especially upon change of weather." These, after four years' growth were cast, and had been three times renewed previously to the memoir being printed, at which time she had "a pair upon her head of six months' growth, and 'tis not without reason believed they will in a short time be bigger than any of the former, for still the latter have exceeded the former in bigness." There is a portrait of her, taken in her 72nd year, in the Ashmolean Museum, at Oxford, where one of the horns is preserved, and another is in the British Museum. She was exhibited in London when 81 years old.

There is in the University Library, at Edinburgh, a horn cut from the head of Elizabeth Lowe, aged fifty years; and in 1790, a Mrs. Allen, with a horn growing out of her head, was exhibited in London.

In the Domesday survey it formed part of the possessions of the Barons of Nantwich, and probably from its proximity to Chester was deemed of more importance than at present, for it was resumed by the crown and assigned to the keeper of Shotwick Castle. In the 17th Charles II. Little Saughall and the estates which had been attached to that office were purchased by Sir Thomas Wilbraham, from whom they have descended to Mr. Brereton Trelawney, as mentioned in the preceding township. It is entirely an agricultural district, without the least claim to any special notice.

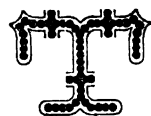
### WOODBANK.

This little township, one of the smallest in the hundred, is situated between Shotwick park and the village of Shotwick, from which it is divided by a stream that runs into the Dee. It is sometimes called Rough or Rowe Shotwick, and contains only 190 acres, valued at £208, with a population by the late census of 75 persons.

The earliest mention of Woodbank is in 1313, when it was sold by Hugh de Wodebank to William de Hoton, and by the marriage of his heiress it passed into the Stanley family, by whom 80 acres are mentioned as being held in an inquisition in 1680. Another portion attached to Shotwick Park, has descended to Mr. Brereton Trelawney, and a third, reputed to have manorial privileges, after having, passed through the hands of several proprietors, became the property of the grandfather of Edward Francis French of Chester, Esq., by whom it is now held.

Woodbank, which is pleasantly situated on a gentle eminence, consists of a narrow slip of land nearly a mile long, in which are scattered several good farm-houses,

## Shotwick Park and Castle.



HE extra-parochial place of Shotwick Park, contains 970 acres valued at £734, and according to the census of 1801, it had 25 inhabitants, but by the late returns the number was only sixteen.

This park formed a part of the desmesne attached to the castle of Shotwick, and was soon after the restoration purchased by the Wilbrahams, from whom it has devolved with the adjacent townships upon Mr. Brereton Trelawney. The estate has long since

been disparked and divided into farms. The "fine lodge for the habitation of the keepers of the prince's highness's deer in the park," is now the residence of a farmer.

The ancient castle of Shotwick was one of a chain of fortresses built by Hugh Lupus, to protect the frontier of his palatinate earldom from the incursions of the Welsh, to which the shallow waters of the Dee rendered this part of the hundred more particularly exposed. It is accordingly found that the lands near Chester were generally held by keeping watch and ward, or other military tenure, against any sudden irruptions of their ever rapacious neighbours. Among the castles then erected for the purpose of defence, Shotwick was one of the most important, and a large district, comprising the townships of the Saughalls, Shotwick Park, and other estates, was appropriated to the service of its governor and garrison. When the necessity which had originally caused its erection had ceased, the castle was still kept in repair, in consequence of the alterations that had taken place in the bed of the river rendering the embarkation of troops at Chester inconvenient and dangerous. The Cheshire soldiers accordingly assembled at Shotwick, and the annals of the county record that on several occasions it was honoured by the presence of the princes and monarchs of England, among others by Henry II., in going to, and returning from Ireland, and by Edward I., in 1278. There are now no means of ascertaining when it was destroyed. Leland mentions it as existing at the date of his survey ; and Webb, describing it in 1620, simply says, "where sometimes have been, and yet are remaining the ruins of a fair castle, that stands upon brink of Dee, within the Park." (*See Appendix, p. 14.*) A drawing of the fortress, as it then stood, is given in the *Harl. MSS.*; but the inroads of the sea and the depredations of the farmers had "obliterated all resemblance to the plan" when Mr. Ormerod wrote, and nothing now remains to point out the site, except a mass of earth-works and two deep entrenchments on the land side.

## Parish of Stoke.



ALTHOUGH the parish of Stoke, or Stoak, contains only the two townships of Stoke and Little Stanney, in which are 1407 acres, valued at £1897, and a part of Whitby, which has been referred to under Eastham, it may not be improper here to include with it the extra parochial place of Great Stanney, and also that of Stanlaw, where once stood a celebrated Cistercian monastery, as together they form the eastern boundary of the hundred.

The entire parish, excepting one farm, together with the township of Great Stanney, belongs to General Sir Henry Edward Bunbury, Bart., K.C.B., of Stoke Barton, in the County of Suffolk, who holds the usual court-baron and court-leet for the manors.

Mr. Ormerod frequently mentions the then wretched state of this parish, which he describes as the most desolate and miserable in the county ; but it is evident that very material alterations and improvements have taken place since the estates became vested in the present proprietor. The principal part of the houses have been substantially rebuilt, and instead of being the worst, it is one of the best districts in the hundred. The roads, however, are yet very indifferent, and it is to be regretted that among the other improvements, the ancient school-house has been neglected. It stands tenantless and in ruins opposite the rebuilt hall of Stanney. The education of the children is now limited to a few hours' tuition on Sunday in the church.

### STOKE.

The township of Stoke, which contains 617, acres of the annual value of £831, had in 1841 only 111 inhabitants, though the return of 1801 gave 120, occupying 20 houses.

Stoke is not mentioned in Domesday. The name of the earliest baronial possessor that occurs is Roger de Soterleigh, which appears in a deed without date, but previously to 1216, when his successor presented to the church, which at that time was attached

to the manor. In 1326 Edmund de Soterleigh transferred this manor to Peter le Roter de Thornton, whose descendants held the manor in 1349, but had alienated the church. Upon the division of the estates of the Thorntons, the greater portion went to the Duttons, from whom it passed successively, in marriage, to the Gerards of Fleetwood, and of Gerards-Bromley, by whom it was sold, about the middle of the last century, to the Bunbury family, who had previously acquired the other part, and the entire, except one farm, is now the property of Sir Henry Edward Bunbury, Bart.

The church, situated under the shelter of the only eminence in the parish, is of great antiquity. In 1827 a new tower and north transept were added; the south side and south transept were then rebuilt, and a small gallery erected, so that little of the old fabric remains, yet sufficient to show its original construction to have been coeval with the conquest. The church, which is of red stone, is about sixty yards long, and nine in width, divided into two parts by a heavy arch. The south transept is the burial place of the Bunburys; the monuments on the walls of which were transferred from the former transept which was of wood. The windows are decorated with stained glass of peculiar brilliancy, particularly the great oriel, in which are the arms of the Bunburys, together with those of the bishop and county of Chester. A very ancient font remains, richly ornamented in the Saxon style. The roof is a very common-place piece of workmanship, entirely of wood.

The church was given by Sir Peter de Thornton, in 1349, to the dean and chapter of the collegiate church of St. John, at Chester, who in the same year presented one of their chaplains to the cure.

The living is a perpetual curacy, now in the gift of Sir Henry E. Bunbury, Bart., who possesses the impropriation and the advowson. The great tithes belong to him; those of hay and potatoes to the curate. The present vicar is the Rev. John Thomas Elliot West, whose emoluments, in the *Clergy List* of 1841, are stated at £130 per annum.

#### LITTLE STANNEY.

This township contains 790 acres, of the annual value of £1066. The population, which in 1801 consisted of 203 persons, was by the late census returned at 163 only.

Little Stanney is not mentioned in Domesday, but is generally supposed to have



been included with Great Stanney, under the name of *Stannie*. A family bearing the local name was settled here as early as 1200, and in the reign of Edward II. the estate became vested in the sole heiress of David de Stannich. She married David de Bunbury, and both the manor and township have since remained in the possession of their descendants.\*

Stanney Hall, the ancient residence of the Bunbury family, is described by Mr. Ormerod who resided in the neighbourhood, as a very extensive building, chiefly of timber, the large court room of which was singularly curious, with a heavily ornamented roof of wood. It has since been entirely taken down, and its site is now covered with an excellent farm house and very extensive outbuildings, which are yet surrounded by a wide moat, similar to those by which most of the ancient halls of the county were protected. When the old house began to fall into decay, the Bunburys fixed their residence at a much smaller and more modern building, which, referring to the character and pursuits of the parties who frequented it, obtained the name of "Rake Hall;" but this, upon the marriage of Sir William Bunbury, with a member of a distinguished family of the county of Suffolk, was deserted by him and the permanent residence of the Bunbury's has since been in that county.

Though enjoying considerable estates in various parts of Cheshire, the Bunburys, during many generations, have, with few exceptions, avoided all alliances with any of the principal families of the county; to this and to their being generally absentees, in a great measure, may be attributed the miserable destitution their estates exhibited.

## Great Stanney.

**T**HE extra-parochial place of Great Stanney lays adjacent to the last-noticed township. It contains 947 acres, stated of the annual value of £1050, and in 1841 the number of its inhabitants was 53.

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\* The dignity of a baronet was conferred upon "Thomas Bunbury, Esq., of Stanney in Wirral," in 1681, seventh in descent from whom is the present baronet, who succeeded to Stanney and the other estates of his uncle, the late General Sir Thomas Charles Bunbury, Bart., in 1821. The surname of the family was originally St. Pierre, and its founder in England a Norman, attached to the fortunes of Hugh Lupus, from whom he obtained a portion of the barony of Malpas, of which Bunbury was a part.

Stanney is mentioned in Domesday as being held by the Earl of Chester, by whom it was afterwards transferred to the Baron of Halton. In 1178 it was given to the monastery at Stanlaw, and, notwithstanding the removal of the monks to Whalley, it remained in their possession until the dissolution, when it fell into the hands of the Warburtons, from whom it was purchased, in 36 Henry VIII., for five hundred marks, by Henry Bunbury, Esq., from whom it has descended to the present proprietor, Sir Henry E. Bunbury, Bart.

The township is bounded on one side by the Mersey, which has intruded upon it by the destruction of lands, previously deemed unworthy of cultivation or the expense of preservation; and on the other, by stagnant morasses: it is approached by roads made of clay, without any other materials, which are almost impassable even in summer.

The monks of Stanlaw had a grange here, erected on the most elevated part of the township, by the side of an artificial terrace, yet remaining, of upwards of two hundred yards in length; traces of buildings are occasionally found in farming operations within the principal enclosure, called Grange Cow Worth, which contains about six acres, surrounded by a deep moat, yet occasionally filled with water.

## Stanlaw.

**T**HE little extra-parochial township of Stanlaw occupies the site of the grounds of an ancient monastery, and includes 253 acres of grass land, which are valued in the county books at £349 per annum. By the late census it was inhabited by 30 persons.

Stanlaw, one of the most miserable townships in the county, is situated on the banks of the Mersey, from the waters of which it is partially protected by embankments, which have frequently yielded to the force of the waters. It is "shut out by naked knolls from the fairer country which spreads along the feet of the forest hills on the south east, and approached by one miserable trackway of mud, whilst every road that leads to the haunts of men, seems to diverge in its course as it approaches Stanlaw."

In this gloomy morass—which was formerly covered with the tide, and even in the

last century, insulated by the waters of the Gowy—and at the point where this river joins the Mersey, a rock which abruptly rises from the marsh was selected by John, the sixth Baron of Halton, and Constable of Chester, for the site of a convent for Cistercian monks, which he founded in 1178, immediately previous to his departure for Palestine.

The foundation charter of Stanlaw is yet extant. By it the monastery was endowed with the lands of Stanlaw, the townships of Stanney and “Mauriceaston,”\* and with a court-house in Chester; and all the dependants and followers of the Baron were most solemnly adjured never to attempt to diminish or injure the possessions† thus vested in the abbot and monks, of the “Benedictum Locum,” as he expresses his wish that it should be thenceforth considered.

Great additions were subsequently made to the lands and revenues of the abbey, particularly in Lancashire; but the monks were not long destined to enjoy the honours and possessions which were showered upon them by the successive Constables of Chester. In 1279,‡ the chartulary of St. Werburgh states that an irruption of the sea did incredible damage at Stanlaw and other parts; and in the same year, most of their possessions were again inundated. Seven years afterwards, and before they had recovered from the melancholy effects of the waves, the great tower of their church fell, and materially injured the body of the building; and in 1289 the greater part of the abbey was destroyed by fire. Representations of their great distress, that the encroachments of the sea had rendered the monastery inaccessible at spring tides, and that the offices were absolutely three feet under water, having been made to Pope Nicholas IV., permission was at length granted for the translation of the monks to Whalley, with which the liberality of the De Lacey had endowed them, on condition of increasing their numbers by twenty.

Considerable difficulty, however, attended their removal, which was opposed by

\* “Et quicumque hanc meam elemosynam destruere vel minuire voluerit, destruat eum Dominus, et ejus maledictionem et omnium sanctorum et meam habeat.” A much similar malediction is found in the grant of Eastham Church, and also in that of Sherburne Castle, quoted in Peck’s *Desiderata Curiosa*, xiv. c. 6, with a curious chapter on its fulfilment by Bishop More, of Ely.

† The shores of the Dee, as well as the Mersey, appear to have suffered from the inundation. “A. D. 1279; Mare erupit xiii non. Februar. die S’tæ Werburgæ, et incredibilia mala fecit apud Stanlaw et alibi; insuper pontem Cestrie confregit, et asportavit, cursum solitum supra modum excedens.”

‡ Now called Aston Grange, a township in the parish of Runcorn, erroneously stated by Sir Peter Leycester to have been given to the Priory of Norton.

parties who pleaded a prior grant of Whalley, and were only induced to relinquish their claim upon the promise of several large sums of money. Even their own patron opposed their movements. He resumed possession of the church he had given them, and retained it until they assigned to him their chapel at Clitheroe, then valued at one hundred marks. At length, in 1294, the separation finally took place. Five of the monks remained at Stanlaw, one at the Grange of Stanney, and one was transferred to finish his studies at Oxford, where he attained the degree of D.D. The twenty-five that removed to Whalley obtained entrance into the church, "having read their forced revocation before the doors, the people in crowds invoking the judgements of Heaven upon the simoniacs," by whom they had been so long excluded.

Stanlaw, having twelve monks or chaplains attached to it, continued\* as a cell under Whalley until the dissolution, when it fell into the hands of Sir Richard Cotton, and was afterwards sold by his son to Sir John Poole, of Pool Hall. Upon the death of his direct descendant, the late Rev. Sir Henry Poole, in 1820, his estates were sold, and this township purchased by the late Marquis of Westminster.

From the middle of the yard of the farm house, which now occupies the site of the ancient monastery, a subterraneous excavation in the solid rock passes under the adjoining buildings, nearly due east, and emerges, at a distance of about sixty yards, towards the confluence of the Gowy with the Mersey. From this a similar passage, branching off at right angles to the north, leads to a small circular apartment, also in solid rock, which was discovered about thirty years since, when the sea burst violently upon it, and exposed to view several leaden coffins, containing, most probably, the ashes of some of the chaplains that remained here.

There was formerly a causeway leading to Stanlaw between the sea and the townships of Great Stanney and Pool, enclosing nearly 120 acres of land. It was swept away about a century since, and there is now no direct communication between Ince and Great Stanney, while the only access to Stanlaw is along the margin of the river.

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\* The greatest efforts had been used to re-edify the abbey. An indulgence of forty days was granted to all who aided by their contributions; and another of thirty days, by the Bishop of Bangor, in 1283, to all who should either go to Stanlaw to pray for the souls of the Earls of Lincoln, and the Constables of Chester there buried, or should assist in removing the monastery and the bodies of the founders. Its distresses even excited commiseration on the Continent. The Archbishop of Montroyal and the Bishop of Versailles granted similar indulgences, to all who would undertake a pilgrimage to pray for the soul of Edmund de Lacy. These documents and upwards of fifty charters relative to Stanlaw Abbey, are preserved in the *Harl. MSS.* 2052.

## Parish of Thurstanston.



HE parish of Thurstanston,\* situated about sixteen miles from Chester and seven from Birkenhead, is one of the smallest in the county, containing only a small part of the townships of Irby and Greasby, in addition to that of Thurstanston: in it there are 711 acres, valued in the county books at £729 with a population of 168 according to the late census.

The manor of Thurstanston appears from the Domesday survey to have been assigned, with the greater part of the adjacent townships, to Robert de Rodelent; after his death it fell into the hands of Matthew de Rodelent, who is presumed to have been an illegitimate son of the original grantee. Upon his brother becoming a monk at

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\* The derivation of the name of this parish has given rise to much discussion. In Domesday, it occurs as *Thurstaneton*; in a grant shortly afterwards, it appears as *Turtaniston*, and subsequently it is spelt *Thurstanton* and *Thursington*; in the chartulary of the Cathedral of Chester, it is *Thurstanston*, the appellation adopted in the text. Robert de Rodelent, to whom was given the moiety of all the lands he could conquer in North Wales, built the castle of Rhuddlan, (whence his name,) and another "more northwardly, close to the sea." This was probably at Thurstanston, as it appears from the Domesday survey, that he then held it, and all the adjacent shores from Neston to the entrance of the Mersey. He had several illegitimate sons, one of whom, all antiquaries agree, settled in this township, and took its local name, which is of Saxon or Teutonic origin, long anterior to the introduction of any Norman names into this country. The first syllable may reasonably be taken for the name of some chieftain, or leader of a body of adventurers, who adopted it, in this foreign land, in commemoration of their idolized tutelary deity. This is frequently done even in the present day; and *Thor* was so much worshipped that not only upwards of forty towns in this country bear his name, but one day in our week is called after him. *Ing* is the Danish and Saxon word for meadow, or low ground and common, (even yet used in the eastern counties of this kingdom,) of which there is much in that part of the parish in which the village is situated; and *ton* unquestionably means town or village. Hence *Thursington* would imply *the chief's town in the valley*. But the second syllable is more frequently written *stane*, or *stan*, which is the Saxon for stone; whence Thurstanston would give the *chief's stone town*, a definition which seems by no means improper, for though few houses were then built of stone, the abundance of that material in the hills which surround the village would, doubtless, make Thurstanston an exception, and the signature frequently occurs of *Thurstano de Montfort*, or Thurstan of the strong hill, or hold.

In a letter from a Mr. Appleton, who in the last century was considered a high authority on surnames, he says, under date of August, 1722:—"Thurs-ington is *Thor's son's town*. All names ending in *ing* are patronymics, or derived from the father of a family; so Thursing is *Thor's* or *Thor's son*, and every body knows *ton* is the abbreviation of town. Thor was the ancient king or general of our Saxon ancestors while they lived in Scythia or Tartary, and before they came into Germany, whom after death they deified and worshipped." Mr. Lower, the talented author of the interesting *Essay on Surnames*, in a communication on those of this neighbourhood, a few months since, says, "I should certainly read it, the tune, town, or enclosure of Thurstan, which I take to be the name of an early possessor."

Chester, Matthew presented the church to the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh, in that city. William, the son of this Matthew, assumed the local name, and confirmed the gift of his father to the abbey for ever. By the marriage of his grand-daughter and sole heiress, to Patrick de Heselwell, sheriff of Chester, *temp.* 5 Edward I., the manor and estates of Thurstanston were conveyed to that family; and William, the offspring of this marriage, is noticed as joining with the abbot of Chester, in making the bounds between this township and Irby, which are described as commencing at "the old trench where formerly had stood a hospital for lepers."\* His only daughter married Robert, the son of William de Whitmore; and by subsequent *post mort.* inquiries it was found that the Whitmores had held Thurstanston among other possessions from the king *in capite* by military service.

The Whitmores continued to hold the manor in uninterrupted descent, until 1751, when Joseph Whitmore died, leaving six daughters coheiresses to the property, which in 1816 was divided into twenty-four equal shares, in which proportions the rents were received. It is almost unnecessary to add that legal proceedings were the result of this minute division of the estates, and finally, in 1816, by a decree of Chancery, the manor and hall devolved exclusively on Mrs. Lucy Browne, the widow of Charles Browne of Marchwiel Hall, in the county of Denbigh, Esq. Upon the decease of Mrs. Browne, Nov. 5, 1832, her property passed by her will to Colonel John Baskervyle Glegg, then Military Secretary to General Lord Aylmer, the Governor General of Canada.

Thurstanston is situated on some of the highest land in the hundred, immediately overhanging some meadows which descend to the shores of the Dee. At the northern part of the township these low lands turn inwards and sweep between the rocky elevations to the flat surface which presents itself in the centre of the end of the peninsula, opposite the Irish sea. Through this valley there can be no doubt that an arm of the sea once flowed, separating West Kirkby from the other portions of the peninsula, as the Hilbre Islands now are.

The village stands at the southern termination of this valley, immediately above the broad estuary of the Dee, from which it is distant about one mile, presenting a pleasing contrast to the barren moors and abrupt precipices by which it is surrounded.

The parish church, formerly enclosed in the court yard of the hall, was of very

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\* On the moor, over which the boundary line runs, are some large fragments of broken rock, having much the appearance of the remains of an ancient rocking stone, but too much injured to be ascertained.

great antiquity; but being extremely low, dark, inconvenient, and, above all, in a very dangerous state from decay, in 1820 it was finally taken down, and the present erected. It is a plain stone building, dedicated to St. Bartholomew, of no acknowledged style of architecture, but partaking of the early English.

From the period the parish church was given to the Abbot and Convent of St. Werburgh, it remained in possession of that monastery until the dissolution, when it was given to the Dean and Chapter of the newly formed Diocese of Chester, with whom the advowson still remains. The living has generally been conferred upon one of the minor canons; the present incumbent is the Rev. John Fish, instituted in 1822; the annual value was stated in the *Clergy List* of 1837 to be £242.

Thurstanston Hall, for centuries the residence of the Whitmores, is now that of John Baskervyle Glegg, Esq., lord of the manor. It is a stone building of some extent, and although the date of its erection is unknown, it is evidently of considerable antiquity, and was so described by Webb, upwards of two hundred years since. It has been surrounded with strong walls, which also enclosed the church, and was protected with a moat.\* The principal front of this, and most of the old halls in the neighbourhood, is to the north, a portion of the building has the appearance of having been a chapel, having one door into the hall, and another, for the villagers, opening into the court yard, but which was closed up when the western wing of the house was rebuilt, in 1680. The great hall is a very capacious chamber fitted up with

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\* The family of the Gleggs, so frequently occurring in this Hundred, is a very ancient one and of high respectability. Originally of British extraction, their early possessions were retained by defence, rather than increased by conquest; yet they held a high station in the county prior to the marriage of Guilbert Glegg, about the middle of the fourteenth century, to Joan or Joanna, daughter, and, ultimately, co-heiress of Stephen de Merton; which Guilbert appears, by a *post mort. inq. temp.* 35 Edward III., to have been seized of the manor of Gayton, with other estates, and the issues of the court of the Hundred of Caldy, in right of his wife. Of his immediate successors little is known, until the time of Thomas, his great-grandson, who intercepted the king's treasures at Gayton, for which he was imprisoned at Chester Castle. The eldest son of this Thomas, married a Poole of Poole Hall; and by the marriage of John, their eldest son and heir, with Isabella, daughter of John Leycester of Tabley, the Gayton line of the Gleggs was continued. To their second son, also named John, Grange was granted by letters patent 6 Edward VI., and he became the founder of the house of Grange, which after seven generations, terminated upon the death of William Glegg, (who married Deborah Birkenhead, the sister of the wife of his cousin, John Glegg, of Irby,) in 1739, without heirs male.

Five several marriages of the successive heirs of John, the elder son of Thomas above named, bring down the house of Gayton to Sir William Glegg, who was knighted there by William III. He married Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir Robert Cotton of Combermere; and his grand-daughter, who ultimately became his heiress, married John Baskervyle of Old Withington, Esq., who soon afterwards assumed the name of Glegg. The grand-son and heir of the latter, John Baskervyle Glegg of Gayton, married Anne, daughter of Thomas Townley Parker, of Entwistle and Cuerden in the county of

elaborate carvings in oak, and contains a museum of curiosities collected by its gallant occupier during his military services in America and Africa. There are several cabinets and other articles of oaken furniture, the most modern of which bears the date of 1660.

### IRBY.

The township of Irby is situated in the parishes of Thurstanston and Woodchurch. It contains 744 acres, entirely devoted to agricultural purposes, and is assessed in the

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Lancaster, Esq., and has issue, John Baskervyle Glegg of Old Withington and Gayton, lord of the court of Caldý Hundred, a gentleman who filled the office of High Sheriff of the county of Chester in 1814.

The Irby or Backford branch of the Gleggs, descend on the Glegg side from Edward, the fifth of the house of Grange, who purchased the manor and estate of Irby in 1655-6, which he gave to Edward, his son by a second marriage. John, the only son of this Edward, married Frances, daughter of Henry Birkenhead of Backford, and as he fixed his abode at the family residence of the Birkenheads, the Gleggs of Irby, should, thenceforth, be more properly designated as of Backford. The family of the Birkenheads first occurs in the reign of Edward III.; they are subsequently mentioned in a variety of documents extending over ten generations, until the male line became extinct by the death of Henry Birkenhead, above named, in 1717. He left two daughters, co-heiresses; the younger, Deborah, who married William Glegg of Grange, died without issue; the elder, Frances, who married John Glegg of Irby, had issue a son, John, who, in 1762, married Betty, the daughter of John Baskervyle Glegg of Old Withington and Gayton, Esq., who died in 1810, and by whom he left issue: *first*, Birkenhead Glegg of Backford, a general in the army, who married Emma, daughter and co-heiress of Edward Holt of Ince Hall, Lancashire, Esq., and dying at Liverpool, 9th December, 1842, was succeeded by his eldest son, John Baskervyle Glegg, a captain in the 13th Royal Lancers, who died, unmarried, in the following year, and was succeeded by his brother, Edward Holt Glegg, a captain in the Rifles; *second*, John Baskervyle Glegg of Thurstanston, Esq., lately colonel in the army, who married Maria Georgina the daughter of John Cotes of Woodcote in the county of Salop, Esq., by the Lady Maria Grey, daughter of George Harry, fifth Earl of Stamford.

The Baskervyle family is one of the most ancient and honourable in England. "Its name is upon the roll of Battel Abbey; it has ever maintained the highest rank among the gentry; and it can boast of the blood of the PLANTAGENETS." *Burke's LANDED GENTRY*. Edit. 1845. A moiety of the manor and estates in Withington was granted to Sir John de Baskervyle, by Henry III., in reward for military services in Gascony so early as 1266, since which they have passed in direct descent to Mr. Glegg, the present proprietor.

The Whitmores, so long the lords of Thurstanston, have already been noticed. An ancient pedigree traces the maternal descent of Randal, the third of that name, Earl of Chester, to the Whitmores, and certainly a figure cased in armour, which occupies a niche in the staircase leading from the hall to the chapel, has for centuries been pointed out as the effigy of the Earl Hugh his father. But the marriage and offspring of this Earl being involved in a mystery that neither the arguments of the learned antiquaries of Chester, Sir Peter Leycester and Sir Thomas Mainwaring, in their ten or twelve pamphlets on the subject, or the ingenuity of the court of law, to which their dispute was referred, could unravel, it may here suffice to state that the Whitmores were unquestionably in possession of Thurstanston at the latter part of the reign of Edward I. In a document of that date reference is made to the father and grandfather of the then proprietor, since which, during the long period of upwards of five hundred years, their descent is regularly ascertained by existing registers, which show their numerous alliances with the Davenports, Egertons, Grosvenors, Pooles, Stanleys, Willbrahams, and the leading aristocracy of the county.



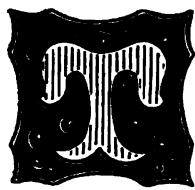
county books at £789 : its population by the late census was returned at 107 persons, being an increase of only two since the return of 1801.

The manor of "*Erby in Wirhale*," was given to the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh by the foundation charter in 1093, and it continued in their possession until the dissolution. It was then granted to the dean and chapter of the new diocese of Chester, but obtained from them soon after by the intrigues of Sir Richard Cotton, by whose son it was sold. After passing through the families of the Harpurs and the Leighs, it was sold by the co-heiresses of the latter to Edward Glegg, a younger son of John Glegg, of Grange, Esq., from whom it has descended to Edward Holt Glegg of Backford Hall, Esq. its present possessor.

Irby Hall, for several centuries the residence of this branch of the Gleggs, still remains. It is a large fabric of timber and plaster, standing upon the boundary of the two parishes, surrounded with ash trees of greater age and size than any in the neighbourhood. The building was situated within a moat, three sides of which remain, each about 100 yards in length, having a mound of considerable height. Within this enclosure was also the ancient manor-house of the abbey of Chester, which was one of the four principal establishments that were required by the charter of Randal de Gernons, to be, at all times, large enough, and kept in sufficient order and repair to receive the abbot, the monks, and their servitors, when they held their courts in Wilaveston or Wirral. These fortified enclosures were requisite, as, from the facility with which the Welsh could cross the Dee, on their predatory excursions, the monks were obliged to protect their granges, or stores, with works of no inconsiderable strength.

There are a few good houses in and about the village, which has a more respectable appearance than others in the vicinity.

## The Parish of West Kirkby.



THE extensive parish of West Kirkby contains the townships of West Kirkby, Caldý, Grange or Great Caldý, Greasby, Frankby, Great Meolse, Little Meolse, and Newton-cum-Larton, which extend over 5270 acres, valued at £4458, and by the census of 1841 contained only 1197 inhabitants, although in 1821 the number was 1140.

Several of these townships are mentioned in the Domesday Survey, although the parish is not; but it was most probably held by Robert de Rodelent, for soon after the conquest the church of West Kirkby, and that of Hilbre Island were given by him to the monks of St. Ebrulf, at Utica in Normandy, who acquired many benefactions in Cheshire, from their church being the burial place of some of the ancestors of Rodelent. These grants were confirmed by the king in a charter dated in 1081.\* Some years after which, the inconvenient distance of the Cheshire desmesnes induced the Norman monks to sell them to the abbot of St. Werburgh, for an annual payment of £30 (*See Harl. MSS. 1965,*) and ultimately falling into the hands of the Earls of Chester, they were attached to the manor of Caldý and conferred on the monks of Basingwerke.

A most singular and warmly contested dispute arose between the monks of this abbey and those of Chester, for the right of the presentation to the church, which continued for some time, during which Randal de Blundeville is said to have resorted to military force to obtain possession of the holy edifice, which was finally confirmed to the latter, with whom it remained until the dissolution, when it was conferred on the newly formed bishopric of Chester. The parish church dedicated to St. Bridget is situate near the shore, by the side of a rocky elevation close to the village of West Kirkby, It had formerly a chancel, nave, and an aisle on the north side, but the divisions of the latter are now removed; and of several stalls and other

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\* In this document we read, among other things, thus:—"Robertus Vero de Rodelento, Præfatus Hugone Cestriensi Comite Domino, suo concedente, dedit Sancto Ebrulfo Cherschibiam cum duabus Ecclesiis; unam scilicet quæ in ipsa villa est, et aliam propè illum Manerium in insula Maria."—(*See Life of De Rodelent, Ordericus, page 602.*)

ornaments mentioned by the Lysons, there are now no traces. There are few monuments of interest in the church or church-yard. In the former are many memorials of the Gleggs of Gayton, of Tranmere, and of Caldý, remaining, others described in the *Harl. MSS.* were either removed or destroyed during the rebuilding of the church, which appears to have been undertaken in different periods.

On the right hand of the chancel door a carved red stone, exhibiting as a coat of arms a plain cross with eagles for supporters, crested with a coronet, is inscribed "*H. S. E. Johannes Van Zoellen nuper de Civitate Bristolensis Generosus qui obiit tert. die Septembris, A.D. 1689.*"\*

The roll of the presentations to the church is complete from 1215 to the dissolution since which, with one exception, the dean and chapter, who have had the appointment, have conferred it on one of the minor canons of their own cathedral. The present rector is the Rev. James Slade, A M. prebendary of Chester, and vicar of Bolton, the resident officiating minister is the Rev. William Armitstead, the value of the rectory, in the clergy list of 1837 is stated at £703 per annum. The charitable endowments of this parish are considerable. A free school situated in the township of Grange was founded in 1636, by William Glegg, of that place, Esq., and endowed with lands producing £26 per annum; to this was added, by the will of Thomas Bennett of Newton, a rent charge of £30 per annum. This charge was entailed upon an estate called the NEW HOUSE, which was given by Mr. Bennett for the use of the poor of the parish, without any appointment, except that £24 should be annually expended in clothing for that number of poor persons, who should receive it in the church on Good Friday, and the residue, then estimated at £56, be expended in bread. This estate, which contains 252 acres, was let this spring, 1845, to John Formby, Esq., a magistrate of, and an extensive agriculturalist in, Lancashire, at a varying rent. By the report of the Commissioners of Charitable Inquiries, in 1837 it produced £217; they add, "The Bishop of Chester, and the heir of the founder, now by descent and subsequent purchase John Shaw Leigh, Esq., and the Churchwardens, have the right of appointing and removing the schoolmaster," and the state of the establishment is described as

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\* He was attached to the army of the Duke of Scomberg, which encamped on the two Meolses, previously to embarkation for Ireland. His forces consisted principally of recruits, who are said to have suffered much from sickness and the severity of their march,—a statement which the registers of several churches in this neighbourhood confirm,

being "free to children of parishioners—number of scholars not stated—but regret expressed that the character of the school, formerly a good grammar school where geometry and navigation were also taught, was altogether changed, apparently from the incompetency of the master, his want of controul in the school, and partiality to pay-scholars." *Parl. Digest*, 1841, page 40. There are also funds for weekly donations of bread to the poor, and for the supply or loan to them, at a low charge, of a certain limited number of cows.\*

A large portion of the parish appears to have been insulated at some distant period by the sea flowing through a deep valley or channel, which falls into the estuary of the Dee, between Thurstanston and Caldy, The greater party of the land thus separated is rocky and of a totally different character from any other district of the Hundred, abounding with large masses of stone. On the summit of the range of hills which rise immediately behind the church and far above its tower, are found large beds of shells and other marine deposits.

The quality of the soil varies materially in different parts of the parish, in the townships on the sea shore it is very light and sandy, and being in a great measure sheltered by the hills from the easterly winds, is particularly suited for the growth of early potatoes, for which it has long been celebrated; large quantities are grown for the Liverpool markets, whence, by railway, they are forwarded to London, and the large inland towns. There are some extensive commons yet unenclosed, and the best lands in the parish afford ample scope for improvement.

### WEST KIRKBY.

The township of West Kirkby, which in 1801 contained 148 persons, occupying 25 houses, by the last census was returned as having 330 inhabitants. The rated value of the land, which consists of 639 acres, is £663.

The manor and township were given, with the church, before the Domesday survey, to the monks of Utica. After various exchanges and disputes with those of Chester, in one of which recourse was had to arms, they were awarded to the

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\* It is very questionable whether these bequests have been advantageous to the parish; they have excited great exertions to gain a settlement in it, by persons whose circumstances have made them claimants on the funds; while on the other hand there is hardly an instance of a poor family removing out of the parish; at present, however, there is plenty of employment for all, and the poor rates are trifling.

abbot and convent of St. Werburgh, with whom they remained until the dissolution ; yet the monks of Basingwerke continued to exercise some nominal claim, and the manor was held under them by a family that assumed the local name. In 1681 it was purchased by the Earl of Bridgewater, and has since been sold in severalties. Hence there are several who have a right to exercise manorial rights in succession, but no courts have lately been held here, nor do any of the freeholders now claim to act as lord of the manor.

The village is most agreeably situated upon a sort of natural terrace, overhanging the river Dee, from which it is distant about a third of a mile. The houses in general do not present anything beyond the range of ordinary farm houses ; but in the immediate vicinity are several very handsome mansions, among which in particular may be mentioned Spring Grove, the elegant residence of John Robin, Esq. It is placed on a considerable elevation, yet sheltered in a great measure from the easterly winds, and commands, not only from the house, but every part of the extensive pleasure grounds, an unrivalled view of the sea, the opposite coast, and more distant scenery of Wales. The rapid advances of the eastern side of the hundred, to the bustle of commercial pursuits will greatly enhance the value of this and the adjacent townships on the eastern bank of the Dee, by the comparative seclusion they afford.

The "Car,"—a common extending over two hundred and twenty acres,—is included in the provisions of the act for the enclosure of the waste lands of Wallasey and West Kirkby. The small river the Birken, which has its origin in this Car, (defined by Bayley, an obsolete word for a *pool*,) runs through several of the townships of this parish, Woodchurch, and Bidston, before it joins the Mersey, giving its name to the arm of that river, Birkenhead Pool, sometimes Wallasey Pool.

#### CALDY, OTHERWISE LITTLE CALDY.

The township of Caldý situated on the shores of the Dee contains 715 acres of the annual value of £720. Its population which in 1801 was 92, and in 1821 only 90, had by the late census increased to 104 persons.

The manor of Caldý appears in the Domesday survey as *Calders* and forming part of the possessions of Robert de Rodelent, after whose death it was held by a presumed illegitimate son, whose heiress, Agnes de Thurstanston, conveyed it by marriage to the Heselwells. It subsequently passed with the manors of Heswall and Thurstanston to

the Whitmores, and upon the division of their estates, under a decree in Chancery in 1816, it became vested in parties, from whose representatives it was purchased by Richard Watson Barton, of Springwood, near Manchester, Esq., in 1832.

The village of Caldý, which stands about seven miles from Chester and eight from Birkenhead, was at that time one of the worst in the neighbourhood, consisting of a few fishermen's huts and small cottages, scattered over the side and at the foot of a rocky eminence, separated from the township of Thurstanston by a deep valley embedded with rock. But its present singularly neat appearance may be advantageously contrasted with any others in the immediate vicinity. The improvements reflect much credit on the liberality of Mr. Barton, and on the taste and judgement of his architect and builders, Mr. Rampling, and the Messrs. Walker of Birkenhead, by whom every house in the township was either rebuilt or entirely renovated.

A few small houses, called DAWPOOL or DALPOOL, scattered below Caldý on the verge of the river are all that remain of that place, once the celebrated rendezvous for the embarkation of the troops of Cheshire and Lancashire.

Dawpool, which is a separate manor, is now seldom approached except by the few fishermen who reside on the beach; but were the road from Woodside to Caldý improved and continued to the shore, it would become a good route to the northern part of Flintshire, as the distance from Liverpool to Mostyn Quay, &c., might be accomplished in one half the time now occupied by the present road, *via* Queen's Ferry.

#### GRANGE, MORE PROPERLY GREAT CALDY.

The inland township of Grange, which contains 920 acres of the annual value of £761, had in 1841 only 132 inhabitants.

The manor and township of *Calders*, now generally called Grange, was in the Domesday Book recorded as the property of Hugh de Mara. It was soon afterwards resumed by the Earls of Chester, and granted by Randal de Gernons, together with West Kirkby and the advowson of its churches to the abbot and convent of Basingwerke on the opposite shores of the Dee. After their differences with the monks of Chester it was once more united to the earldom, and in the reign of Edward VI. it was granted, together with the Swannery on Newton Car, by letters patent to John Glegg, second son of the then lord of Gayton, who became the ancestor of the Gleggs of Grange.

In 1785 the manor of Grange was sold with the entire township, excepting the NEW HOUSE property, some poors' lands, and a small estate belonging to the trustees of the Northwich School, by the late William Glegg to the father of the present proprietor, John Shaw Leigh of Liverpool, Esq.

The ancient hall, for several generations the seat of the Gleggs, has been rebuilt, and the new fabric is now the residence of Henry Brown, Esq. an opulent and extensive farmer, who has done much to improve the agriculture of this part of the hundred. It stands to the north-east of a rocky hill that rises above West Kirkby, and near which the cottages that constitute the village are situated. Their position is pointed out by a grove of lofty trees visible from a great distance at sea, and upon the summit of the hill the trustees of the Liverpool Docks have, with the permission of Mr. Leigh, erected a tall column as a land mark to assist the Liverpool Pilots in their avocations. The parish Free Grammar School is in Grange.

In this township the West Kirkby Benevolent Society holds its annual meetings. This excellent institution has been established upwards of 16 years, and under the immediate patronage and direction of the Rev. William Armitstead the curate, has 135 members, nearly all of whom belong to the parish. They have at present about £756 in hand,—an amount of which few societies so recently established, or that have not more contributing members, can boast.

The injurious effects of yearly tenancies, which have been already referred to in the extracts from Mr. Palin's book on the Agriculture of Cheshire, are shewn in the manner in which the New House property, like most of the land in this neighbourhood, has hitherto been let. Upon the late tenant leaving the farm, it was ineffectually offered subject to the usual conditions, but without any term beyond from year to year: at length the present occupier took it at a fixed lease for twenty-one years; and all the restrictions being removed, the average rental amounts to more per acre than the Trustees of the School demanded.

The manor courts of Great Caldy and Little Caldy are totally distinct from the

#### COURT OF THE HUNDRED OF CALDY.

which since its acquisition by Randle de Merton, has descended with the manor of Gayton to the present bailiff of the Hundred, John Baskervyle Glegg, Esq., of Old Withington. Its privileges consist of a view of frankpledge and court-baron, to which

the manorial lords and other proprietors owe suit and service, and are liable to pecuniary fine for non-attendance. From the court rolls it appears that its jurisdiction extended over Gayton, Layton, Thornton Hough, Heswall, Thurstanstun, West Kirkby, Great Meolse, Little Meolse, Newton-cum-Larton, and Poulton-cum-Seacombe, but did not include the townships of either Great or Little Caldy.

## GREASBY.

Greasby contains 816 acres, valued at £692, and by the late census had 147 inhabitants.

This township, in Domesday called *Greavesberrie*, was held by Nigellus de Burceio and its tithes were given to the Abbot and Convent of Chester, previously to their foundation charter, in which the prior donation is recited. In the reign of Edward I. a subsequent proprietor Robert de Rullos gave the entire township to the monks of that monastery, with whom it remained until the dissolution. The manor and tithes were then conferred on the Dean and Chapter of Chester; but they soon fell into the hands of Sir Richard Cotton, who sold them to the Harpurs, subject to a small fee-farm rent to the Chapter. Upon the final settlement of the long-protracted disputes attendant on the proceedings of Sir Richard, the manor was confirmed to his son George Cotton; from him it was bought by Thomas Bennett, whose name will ever be remembered in this part of the hundred as the munificent benefactor to the poor of West Kirkby. At his death it was purchased by the Gleggs of Irby, by whom, after holding it for some time, it was sold to the late Robert Peacock of Upton, Esq. It is now the property of John Ralph Shaw of Arrow, Esq., who occasionally holds a court for the manor.

Inconveniently situated, at some distance from the Ferries, in a remarkably poor and cold country, Greasby is by no means an eligible site for the agricultural occupations by which its inhabitants are supported. There are several large farm houses in the village, through which runs a direct road connecting the eastern and western sides of the north part of the hundred. The land is in general inferior, the rocks in many parts rising to the surface.

## FRANKBY.

The little manor and township of Frankby, which contains 433 acres, of the



value of £454, and has 125 inhabitants, all engaged in agricultural pursuits, is not named in Domesday.

Forming, at an early period, part of the manor of Upton or Overchurch, it was sold in the reign of king John to the Praers, and in quick succession it passed through the families of the Orrebies, the Ardernes, and the Bolds, until 1614, when it was sold to Robert Davies of Horton. Nine years afterwards it was purchased by Peter Daa or Day, in whose family the manor remained for nearly a century, and whose representatives reside in the parish at the present time. Its later transfers were nearly as rapid; at length, in 1818, it was bought by John Robin of West Kirkby, Esq., who owns some considerable estates in the neighbourhood, and is now lord of the manor.

This detail of the manorial estate forms nearly all that can be said of the township, which has gradually become divided among many freeholders. There are three or four large and tolerably respectable houses in the village, which otherwise presents the ordinary appearance of the hamlets of this part of the hundred. The greater part of the land is very inferior. The old hall appears to have been rebuilt about 1680, a date which corresponds with the style of all the larger houses in the village.

#### NEWTON-CUM-LARTON.

The township of Newton-cum-Larton contains 448 acres, valued at £424, and by the late census it had 53 inhabitants.

Newton formed part of the ancient possessions of the old Lancashire family of the Banastres, from whom it passed to the house of Venables of Kinderton, after which there is some difficulty in tracing the tenure of the lands until about the middle of the seventeenth century, when partly by descent and partly by purchase, the greater portion of the township became the property of Thomas Bennett, a respectable freeholder, who died in 1668. He left several claimants to dispute the honour of the manorial rights, having previously bequeathed the New House estate, comprizing upwards of two hundred and fifty-two acres, to the poor of his native parish, West Kirkby. The manor is now claimed by Shalcross Jacson, of Newton Bank near Preston Brook, Esq., son of the late Rev. Roger Jacson of Bebington, by inheritance from his maternal grandfather, Mr. Samuel Anton, and he has succeeded to some portion of the estates. The other part of the township belongs to Sir W. S. Massey Stanley, Bart., whose ancestors, the Masseys of Puddington, are noticed in the reign of Elizabeth as holding lands in Newton.

## GREAT MEOLSE.

This township contains 750 acres, principally sand-hills, valued at £399 per annum, and had by the late census 172 inhabitants.

Great Meolse was granted to Robert de Rodelent, and held by him at the Domesday survey. After his death, so often referred to, the township reverted to the Earl. A family who settled there at a very early\* period assumed the local name of Melas, and continued to hold the manor as capital lords until almost the close of the seventeenth century, when it passed by the bequest of Anne, their last heiress, to Charles Hough, then a minor. He had only one son whose issue, Jane, became the wife of Mr. John Ramsbottom, a surgeon of Liverpool, who was seized of the same in 1814.

A part of Great Meolse which fronts the Irish Sea, for upwards of two miles consists of a narrow slip of sand-hills, protected in some instances by embankments from the inundations of the sea, without a single shrub, or any tenements except a few cottages for the warreners; as it approaches the Hoose it widens and becomes so closely connected with that township that a general description suffices for both.

## LITTLE MEOLSE,

Which contains 550 acres of the value of £345 and has 134 inhabitants, was also held by Robert de Rodelent; after him the Grosvenors and the Meolse became the capital lords of the soil, but the mesne manor was held by the Lancelyns of Poulton, and it passed with their other manors and estates to Randal Greene in right of his wife, Elizabeth, daughter and sole heiress of the Lancelyns, (*See Bebington, ante, p. 180.*) Having levied fines upon their various manors in 1569, they soon afterwards sold that of Little Meolse to the Stanleys of Weaver, and it is now by direct descent the property of Lord Stanley of Alderley, who is proprietor of the entire township.

The greater part of this township was a waste until Lord Stanley granted a building lease of it for a term of eighty years, which has had the effect of causing the

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\* The exact period of the settlement of the Meolse's in Wirral is unknown; they are mentioned in a deed of recognition dated 14 Henry III., which refers to the father and grandfather of the then living Meolse, shewing they had then, 1330, been settled in the township for three generations. They were formerly connected with many of the leading families in the county, and are known to have embarked warmly in the cause of Charles I.; contrasting their subsequent alliances with those formed previously to that period, would lead to the opinion they were great sufferers by their loyalty.

erection of several pleasing villas. These, for summer residences and the convenience of most excellent sea bathing, notwithstanding the apparent want of attraction resulting from their being seated amid sandhills on the desolate extremity of a mere promontory, are in great request and considerable increase may be anticipated in their numbers.

His lordship's father erected here on the margin of the sea, one of the most spacious hotels in the county; there is now a stage-coach daily to Birkenhead, from which the house is about nine miles distant.

### HOOSE.

This little township, containing only 74 acres, valued at £247, separates the townships of the two Meolses, which although nearly twenty times its size have not two-thirds of the inhabitants of "the Hoose," which by the late census was returned at 437. Hoose, though generally considered in the parish of West Kirkby, is in fact, extra-parochial.\* It is not mentioned in the Domesday Book, which may be attributed to its being so small, and being placed between the two almost valueless townships of the Meolses, of which indeed it was most probably then a part. It is first noticed as being held in 1579 by Randle Probye, and in 1558 it was held by John Field and Robert Ormston, [*query*, Urmson, a common name here,] by whose successors it was sold to the Gleggs of Irby, and in 1812 the manor and the greater part of the township became the property of John Timothy Swainson, Esq., formerly Collector of the Customs at Liverpool; and at present it has no less than twenty-five registered resident freeholders.

A commodious church erected here by the lady of Mr. Swainson, is a great accommodation to the many summer visitors as also to the inhabitants at large, who had no place of worship nearer than the parish church, of the benefits of which few were in

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\* According to the Lysons, Mr. Ormerod, and the various works from which they have quoted. It certainly does not appear in the earlier records of the Parish, or in any of the registers or other documents in the Cathedral. The following is an extract from an obliging communication from the Rev. William Armitstead on the subject, dated "*West Kirkby*, 30th April, 1845."

"The Township of Hoose cannot be said to be extra-parochial. It forms a part of this parish, although it does not exactly stand upon the same footing with the other townships; for instance, it does not appoint a Churchwarden, which privilege every other township exercises in rotation. On looking into the registers, which go back as far as the year 1692, I find no mention made of it until after 1700, and then but very rarely; and as it is invariably written *House* or *Hous*, it is not unlikely that in its early days it was no township at all, but merely consisted of a house or two, attached to and forming a part of Little Meolse, of which township, as well as Great Meolse, frequent mention is made in the registers from the first."

the habit of availing themselves. The new church is a neat structure built by Walkers, of Birkenhead, from designs by Picton, of Liverpool. The body is externally of the style generally called Norman; the chancel is of a later date, and the wood-work in the interior of the more ornate character of the English-Gothic; although exception may be taken to some of the proportions of the mouldings, the general effect is superior to the ordinary works of modern artists.

The sea front of these three townships occupies a line of upwards of five miles, reaching from the western part of Wallasey to the village of West Kirkby. Their inhabitants are principally boatmen or fishermen, who have frequently evinced the greatest courage and alacrity in rescuing unfortunate mariners from the horrors of shipwreck. Large banks of sand, extending for miles on the north-west, the entire width of the hundred, are annually the scene of some accidents, and many and most fatal are the disasters that have occurred upon them. If the ill-fated barque strikes on the western ridge, shipwreck is almost inevitable; but once through a narrow passage between the sands and the main land, the mariner may ride in safety in HOYLAKE. This harbour of refuge, as it may well be termed, was anciently called *Lacus de Hild-burgheye*, and *Heyepool*, and belonged to the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh, to whom it was given by William de Lancelyn. The name was evidently derived from the comparatively unruffled surface it presents, and the protective harbour it affords, during the heaviest gales from the westward; the entrance is indicated by the lighthouse and other marks, as is a smaller outlet to the Dee.

The Liverpool Custom-House has a branch establishment or water-guard stationed here under the direction of Lieutenant Sherwood, R.N., who, with the seamen under his command, has frequently obtained the well-merited approbation of the mercantile classes of Liverpool, for their exertions in the rescue and protection of shipwrecked lives and property.

The prevailing winds on this coast being from over the sea, every gale drives volumes of sand inland, while the sand hills, of which the greater part of these townships consist, afford little beyond shelter to the rabbits that abound in the warrens. The light soils of the neighbourhood are only suitable for the growth of potatoes, for which the parish of West Kirkby has long been celebrated. The sands, however, present a firm and dry beach of many miles in extent, affording a marine prospect not exceeded in this part of the kingdom. The adjacent hills of Thurstanston and Grange afford

ample scope for the research and amusement of the Geologist and the Botanist, and should a road be continued from Bidston towards the north-west part of the hundred, similar to that made from Birkenhead to Bidston, this neighbourhood would doubtless soon become a favourite and fashionable place of resort.

### Hilburgh, or Hilbree Island.

(IN THE PARISH OF ST. OSWALD, CHESTER.)

Opposite the north-west angle of the hundred, at a short distance from Little Meolse, are the two small Islands called Hilbree; the larger of which contains six acres of pasture land and about four of rock. This at one period was, undoubtedly, included in the parish of West Kirkby, with which it was granted by Robert de Rodelent to the abbot and convent of St. Ebrulf. They subsequently released it to those of St. Werburgh, as the *Capella de Hildburgheye*, and the transfer was afterwards confirmed by William Fitz-Richard, rector of West Kirkby, who after the parish had passed from the monastery of Basingwerke to that of Chester, quit claimed the island and its chapel to the latter, reserving only the right of sepulture to the mother church of West Kirkby. *Harl. MSS.*, 1965. Thus becoming attached to the convent of Chester, the monks there included it in their own parish, that of St. Oswald, in which it still remains, though upwards of twenty miles from that city; the coroner of which, and not the officer of the county, having jurisdiction on the island.

The Benedictines of St. Werburgh established in the larger island a small cell, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, "and thither," says old Ralph Hollinshed, "went a sort of superstitious fools, in pilgrimage to our Lady of Hilbree, by whose offerings the monks there were cherished and maintained."


Bradshaw relates, in his "Life of St. Werburgh," a legendary story of the miraculous interposition of that saint, in favour of Richard, the young Earl of Chester, which occurred in this vicinity. Returning when a boy from a pilgrimage, on which he had been taken by his guardians, to St. Winifred's well, (Holywell,) they were attacked by a large body of Welsh marauders, and forced to take sanctuary in the monastery of Basingwerke, until the arrival of troops to guard the Earl into his own territories. Upon their reaching the opposite shore of Wirral, the Earl addressed his prayers to

St. Werburgh, when the waters of the Dee were instantly parted, and an immense sand-bank presented itself, over which the soldiery under the command of Fitz-Nigel, baron of Halton and constable of Chester, marched to his assistance. The legend concludes :

And where the host passed o'er 'twixt borders,  
To this day 's ben called, the Constable's borders.

To this, Hilbree may perhaps have been indebted for the subsequent resort of pilgrims to its cell, which had several small endowments for the support of its monks ; among others, one of £3 per annum from Robert de Lancelyn, arising from land in the opposite township of Meolse. Not a vestige of the cell now remains. Until the last few years one single beer-house was the only *avowed* habitation, but a considerable traffic was carried on in smuggled goods, of which it was a favourite receptacle. It is now solely occupied by the agents of the Trinity House, and the persons attached to the Liverpool Telegraph establishment. Upon the island are landmarks to guide vessels into Hoylake ; and it is remarkable for having had one of the most ancient lights or beacons on the coast, to the support of which, John, the last Earl of Chester, contributed, *temp.* Henry III., ten shillings annually. See *Stone's MSS. in Chester Cathedral, and Harleian MSS.* 1965.

## The Parish of Woodchurch.

 N the extensive parish of Woodchurch are contained the townships of Woodchurch, Arrow, Barnston, Knocktorum, Landican, Oxton, Pensby, Prenton, and Thingwall, as also a part of those of Claughton and Irby. In the nine townships, are 4820 acres, valued in the county books at £4494; and inhabited, according to the census of 1841, by 1302 persons.

The parish is not mentioned in Domesday, although several of the townships are there named; but it was included in the original grant to the Abbot and Convent of Chester in 1093 as "Wude Church," a name that was most probably given, soon after the conquest, to some land near the church, which is supposed then to have stood in Landican, where a priest is noticed as living. It is not always safe to assume that a church existed where the survey only says a priest; but in this case, the advowson of Woodchurch descended with the manor of Landican, for several centuries, and as there is no record or tradition of two churches or congregations in the parish, that of Woodchurch is doubtless the one to which the priest at Landican was attached; and although it may be a matter of uncertainty where it was then situated, it is very probable that a church was subsequently erected in Woodchurch, as being in a situation more convenient than any other village afforded.

The advowson is noticed as descending with the manor of Landican until the 13th Richard II.; and although it is not mentioned in subsequent inquisitions, the lords of that manor continued registered as the patrons to 1483, when a chasm occurs in the episcopal registers, and how, or by what arrangement it afterwards became separated, cannot be ascertained. In the early part of the seventeenth century, it was vested in a family of the name of Adams; and in 1673, the Rev. Hugh Burgess, of Dublin, was instituted to the rectory in right of his wife, Mary, the heiress of the Adams. The advowson descended from his eldest son, by heirs female, to Ellen, the only daughter of the late John and Mary Peacock, of Greasby, who married the Rev Bryan King of Woodchurch. Their son, the Rev. Joshua King, A. M., is the present rector, and

has the parochial tithes, which, or rather the living, was valued in the *Clergy List* for 1837, at £827 per annum.

The parish church is a neat stone building, containing a nave, chancel, and an aisle on the south side, separated internally from the body of the church by four arches. It presents a good specimen of the decorated English style of architecture, and is supposed to have been built about the close of the reign of Edward III. The porch and the aisle were re-built, on an enlarged scale, in the early part of the reign of Henry VIII., when the windows of the nave and aisle were introduced. The chancel having become much delapidated, the Rector, in 1844, undertook the restoration of the entire church, a task which has since been completed with great taste and judgment. Upon the removal of a low ceiling an antique oaken roof, elaborately carved, became exposed to view. An open screen, of the decorated style, occupies the usual place under the great arch of the chancel, the pews in which were removed, and stalls erected in lieu thereof on each side, the ends of which terminate in poppy heads, of great antiquity and curious workmanship. The font, which is placed in an elegant baptistry, "is almost unique, and it is considered that there are not more than two in the kingdom of greater antiquity or more exquisite design." The eastern window is ornamented with some ancient stained glass brought from the church of one of the monasteries suppressed at the French revolution, by the late George Smith King, Esq., nephew of the rector.\* The other windows of the church, which are now in excellent order throughout, also contain coloured glass in various armorial designs.

The church, which is dedicated to the Holy Cross, has a handsome embattled tower, of the style prevalent at the close of the fifteenth century. It is supported by massive buttresses, and is much ornamented with shields and gothic carvings. The parsonage

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\* The tablet records, that "The Rector, and his nephew George Smith King, also expended in 1844, in restoring and decorating the church, and putting ancient stained glass in the window, £318 19s. 4d." The same memorial states, that "in 1840, the Rev. Joshua King, A.M. Rector, raised on the walls of the Free School a Room for Girls, at a cost of £126 12s : when an application was made to defray the expenses, and John Wilson Patten, Esq., contributed £25 ; J. W. L. Winder, Esq., Colonel Maxwell Goodwin, and Joseph Hegan, Esq., £20 each ; Captain Baskervyle Glegg, E. S. Harrison, and Thomas Brocklebank, £5 each : making in all, £100 : and the Rector made up the deficiency." After detailing the purchase of a field in 1843, for £135, which lets for £8, and is appropriated to the use of the poor. The inscription proceeds "The whole of the landed proprietors, including two Gentlemen who had no property in the parish, contributed toward this benevolent purpose, £100, and the Rector, the residue." The solicitor by whom the purchase was effected, Mr. Edwin J. Kent, of Liverpool, liberally relinquished his professional charges, the amount of which, £19 6s. 5d., should also be considered as a donation to the parish.



house, for the erection of which a license was granted in 1719, is a large and substantially-built mansion, adjacent to the church yard, near to which stands the parish school. This was erected out of the legacy of William Gleave, an alderman of London, who in 1665 bequeathed £500 for the building and endowment of a school; about £100 having been expended, the residue was invested in land producing £50 per annum, according to the report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into Charities in 1837, when about 50 children were educated.

There are many monumental records in the church, and particularly of the Hockenhalls of Prenton; a family that, although once possessed of much property in this parish, is now supposed to be extinct. In the church, on a large tablet, dated 1741, and bearing the title "Catalogue Mecenatum, or a memorial of those who have been encouragers of learning and benefactors to the parish of Woodchurch," appear the names of various parties whose donations have since unfortunately been lost to the parish.\* James Godyker or Goodier of Barnston, in 1525, gave £13 6s 8d for the purchase of twenty yoke of oxen for the use of the poor. By order of "the Commissioners for Pious Uses," cows were substituted for oxen; and in 1579, the Bishop of Chester awarded that this charity should be under the direction of fourteen trustees; ten to be chosen annually, and the remaining four to consist of the rector, the churchwardens, and the proprietor of Prenton Hall. There are at present 58 cows belonging to the charity, and every poor parishioner is entitled to the use of one on paying 2s. 8d. annually.

The parish presents a great variety of soil and surface, but is not now, by any means, deserving the character given to it by Mr. Ormerod, who, thirty years since wrote, "Cheshire has no parish of equal extent that has less claims to attention than Woodchurch, a district which appears as if it had come unfinished from the hands of nature, and is certainly under little obligation to the improvement of man. It presents an appearance bare, moorish, and cheerless, never rising into the wild or picturesque. None of the component townships, with the exception of Prenton, have been honoured with the residence of their manorial lords for a lapse of many centuries."—(*Vol. ii. p. 286.*)

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\* Of a Library presented to the church or schools in 1676, by the Rev. Richard Adams, and which was increased by him a few years afterwards, not a vestige remains. It has been ascertained, that there was not a book remaining seventy years since.

## WOODCHURCH.

The township of Woodchurch contains 317 acres, of the annual value of £429, and by the census of 1841 had 114 inhabitants.

The manor of *Wude Church*, which was given to the abbot and convent of Chester, at the original endowment in 1093, continued in their possession until the dissolution. It was afterwards granted by Queen Elizabeth to Peter and Edward Grey, upon whom many concealed lands and unappropriated livings were conferred. They sold the manor and estates to Launcelot Bostock, of Lancashire,\* and Francis Hiccocks, of Horsham; in the latter, as survivor, they became vested, and after several subsequent alienations, the manor and considerable part of the township was purchased by Thomas Wilson, D.D., Prebendary of Westminster, a son of the venerated bishop of Sodor and Man. Dr. Wilson, who died the 15th April, 1784, by his will, dated at Bath, 1779, bequeathed his property in this parish to Thomas Macklin of Derby, Esq., with remainder, in default of male issue, to Thomas, second son of Thomas Patten, of Bank Hall in the county of Lancaster, Esq., upon condition of assuming the name, arms, and crest of Wilson only. On the entail being barred in the year 1823, Mr. Wilson resumed the surname and arms of Wilson after Patten, and his eldest son and heir, John Wilson Patten of Bank Hall, Esq.,† one of the representatives in Parliament for the northern division of Lancashire, is at present lord of the manor of Woodchurch.

## ARROW.

The township of Arrow, situated about seven miles from Neston and four from Birkenhead, contains 666 acres, of the annual value by the county books of £673, and by the last census it had 122 inhabitants.

Arrow was part of the original grant made to the Barons of Montalt, under whom 6 Edward I. it was held by Roger de Soterleigh. In 1325, a moiety of the manor was in possession of Peter le Roter of Thornton, among whose seven heirs it was soon after divided, and from amidst the contradictions of the subsequent *post mort.* inquisitions,

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\* *Hart. MSS.*, 2071. † From the Genealogical Collections of Thomas Dorning Hibbert, of the Middle Temple, Esq.

it is utterly impossible to correctly trace the descent, but it passed, much similar to Stoke, through the Duttons and Gerards to the Fleetwoods, who sold their Cheshire estates early in the seventeenth century. The other moiety was in the hands of the Tydesleys, *temp.* Henry VII.; but in 1526 it was sold by Sir Thomas Boteler to the Feoffees of the Warrington Grammar School, from whom, under the authority of an act of parliament, in 1843, it was purchased by John Ralph Shaw of Arrow Hall, Esq., who previously was owner of the greater portion of the township, which he had obtained partly by purchase, and partly by the bequest of his grand-uncle, the late John Shaw of Liverpool, Esq. Arrow Hall, an elegant stone mansion, which has recently been considerably enlarged by the Walkers of Birkenhead, stands on a very commanding situation in the centre of Arrow Park—a walled inclosure of about two hundred acres.

### BARNSTON.

The township of Barnston, situated about two miles south-west of Woodchurch, contains 950 acres, valued in the county books at £552, being at a lower rate per acre than any other land in the hundred, except the sand hills of the Meolses and the rocks of Claughton. In 1801 its population was 129, which had decreased in 1831, to 112, but the return of 1841 exhibited 206 persons, all engaged in agricultural pursuits.

In the Domesday survey *Bernestone* appears as part of the possessions of William Fitz-Nigel, the second Baron of Halton, by whom the manor was divided. One moiety was held under the Baron by a family that assumed the local name, one of whom, Hugh de Bernston, in *temp.* Edward I. sold Capenhurst; and others are mentioned in several inquisitions. In the reign of the second Edward, their connection with Barnston ceased, and their portion of the manor at length became the property of a junior branch of the Bennetts, of Willaston, by one of whom it was sold to the father of the present State Surgeon of Ireland, Gerard Macklin, Esq. The other moiety descended with Raby and other estates, through the Hulses and the Troutbecks, to the Earl of Shrewsbury, the present proprietor, who holds a court-baron and court-leet for the same at Raby. One half of the tithes were given, in 1093, by Ralph de Erminwin, to the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh.

The bulk of the lands in the township, which is situated amid bleak and desolate

moors, is inferior. No traces remain of the old hall, which was mentioned by Bishop Gastrell, as being in a ruinous state in 1724.

A recent edition of the best praised and most widely advertised "Gazetteer of England and Wales" thus describes this township:—"Barnston, in the parish of Woodchurch, lower division of Wirral. There is a tunnel here 550 yards in length, through which the Grand Trunk Canal passes. Distance from Great Neston, four miles north-by-south." There is no canal in the hundred, nor any navigable water nearer than the Dee or the Mersey, from which Barnston is about equi-distant.

### LANDICAN.

The township of Landican, situated four miles from Birkenhead, contains 592 acres, rated in the county books at £482, and in 1841 it had 67 inhabitants.

In the Domesday survey, William de Maldebeng appears as holding the manor of *Landeche*, which in all probability then included the manor and church of Woodchurch. At the division of the property of the barons of Nantwich, on the death of William the last earl of the direct Norman line, Landican was apportioned to Phillippa, one of his coheirresses, wife of the Lord Basset, and by her bequeathed to her eldest daughter. She married the Earl of Warwick, and dying without issue, her property reverted to the crown, and was granted by Edward I., in 1277, to Randal de Merton, who in the same year sold Landican to the Praers, who are mentioned in frequent inquisitions. From them it passed, by female heirs, to the Fulleshursts, and was purchased in 1556 by the Wilbrahams of Woodhey, with whom it continued for nearly two centuries, when it was sold to Dr. Wilson, and has since descended with other property in this parish to Mr. Wilson Patten, M. P.

Insignificant as Landican now is, it was previously to the Norman conquest a place of considerable importance; and in the Domesday survey, although then a waste, it is stated to have been, in the reign of the Confessor, more populous and of greater value than any township in the hundred except Eastham, which far exceeded all the others. It is most probable that a church formerly existed at Landican, not only from the mention of a priest residing there, but from the appellative *Lan*, evidently the ancient British word (*Llan*) for a church, or church-yard.\* In the Domesday book it is written "*Landeche*," the two latter syllables being the French or Norman for "of oak," which, added to the British *Llan*, would imply Oaken church.

## NOCTORUM, OR KNOCKTORUM.

This township, which contains 327 acres, rated in the county books at £293, was returned at the census of 1841 as having 30 inhabitants.

By the Domesday survey, the manor, (then called *Chenotrie*,†) appears to have been granted to the barons of Nantwich, with whom it remained only a very short time before it was alienated, together with Upton, Willaston, and Frankby, to Richard de Praers. It was afterwards given by him, under the name of Knocktirum, to the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh, and was held by them until the dissolution, when it was appropriated to the new diocese of Chester. Falling with the principal possessions of the dean and chapter, into the hands of the Cottons, it was finally surrendered to the crown, and granted *temp.* 35 Elizabeth, to the Harpurs. Soon afterwards it was purchased from them by the family of Crosse of Lancashire, who having held it for a century, sold it to the Chauntrells, by whom it was immediately re-sold to Dr. Wilson, prebendary of Westminster, and it has since passed with other estates in this neighbourhood to John Wilson Patten, Esq. M.P. for North Lancashire. The increasing value of property in this vicinity may be instanced by the fact, that this township, which contains only two houses and is all farmed by one party, was sold in 1844 by Mr. Patten to William Vaudrey of Liverpool, Esq. for thirty-seven thousand pounds.

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\* "*Llan*" occurs as the initial syllable of numbers of parishes in Cornwall and Wales, its prefixure signifying a church; of *decan* I know nothing, unless it be the British form of the Latin "*decanatus*," a deanery. Had the incumbent of the parish ever honorarily or otherwise the title of Dean? Should the insignificance of the place militate against this idea another derivation may be suggested, *Decanatus* and many other words commencing with *Dec* are from *Decem*, ten, and *decem* may have been corrupted in British to *decan*, and thus *Landecan* may mean the church of ten, that is, of ten households or families.—From a communication from Mark Anthony Lower, Esq.

† The learned and ingenious have ineffectually endeavoured to ascertain the derivation of this word, and that by which the township is now designated. Every recent inquiry from the most distinguished etymologists has been equally unavailing. One gentleman, accounting for the connection between the words, writes, "*Chenotrie* at first sight seems as little like *Knocktorum* as possible, still I am inclined to consider them as one and the same; the latter being deducible (by an Horne-Tookeian-ism) from the former, thus:—

CHENOTRIE,	KENOCTRE,	KNOCKTORUM,
CHENOCTRE,	KNOCKTORY,	NOCTORUM.

The orthography of the Domesday Survey is little to be depended upon; its compilers combined British and Norman words together; and presuming the first to be, or intended to be, *chene*, oak, and the second, the ancient British *tre* or town, the word would be significant of Oak-town. This and the adjacent township of Prenton, were especially noted as formerly abounding in oak.

## OXTON.

The township of Oxton, situated about two miles from Birkenhead, contains 650 acres, valued in the county books at £566, and by the last census it had 546 inhabitants—a number that is now considerably increased.

The manor of Oxton belongs to the Earl of Shrewsbury, having passed by successive heirs from the Domvilles, in whom it was vested at a very early period, through the Hulses and the Troutbecks, to the Talbots, in a similar manner to Raby and the other estates of that Earl in Wirral.

The population of Oxton was in 1801 returned at 137, occupying 28 cottages, generally of the most inferior description, the inhabitants of which had acquired an unenviable celebrity in their own neighbourhood. In an "Itineraray" of the county, published in 1821, Oxton is described "as though situated on a bold eminence, commanding extensive views of the river Mersey, Liverpool, and the high lands of Lancashire, the immediate locality is dreary and desolate, presenting a scene of extreme misery and destitution:" it is now very different. The greater part of the township, then a barren waste, has since been enclosed, and it is studded with detached residences, to which every week witnesses the addition of others. This has been caused by the Earl of Shrewsbury, to whom the greatest part of the township belongs, having within the last few years granted building leases for a fixed term; and numerous parties from Liverpool have availed themselves of the facility thus afforded of obtaining land at a small annual rental, whereby they have been enabled to apply their capital to the erection of houses according to their own inclination or circumstances.

The ancient hamlet, seated on the summit of the hill, remains with slight alteration; as the old buildings decay, they are replaced by others of a more respectable appearance. The Hall and Manor House are entirely destroyed. The village is rapidly extending over the entire township, which now contains many elegant villas; and houses of every description and every style of architecture now adorn the place which twenty years ago was "a scene of extreme misery."

The commanding situation of Oxton can hardly be exceeded, and its proximity to the Birkenhead ferries will ensure a continuance of that prosperity, which appears to attach to every part of the township. The principal approach is through Birkenhead, by roads which are kept in excellent condition, and regularly lighted and watched at

the expense of the Commissioners of that town. By the recent act of Parliament, authorising the construction of a park in Birkenhead, a portion of Oxton was included for police purposes in the limits of that township; and the park being immediately adjacent to Oxton, will always furnish its inhabitants with a delightful resort for exercise and recreation. Considerable purchases of land have recently been made by William Potter of Liverpool, Esq., who is building a church in the neighbouring township of Claughton, which will be a great convenience to the inhabitants of Oxton, who have no other place of worship nearer than Woodchurch, except a building converted a few years since into a temporary church by a subscription from the inhabitants.\*

#### PENSBY.

The township of Pensby is situated on a moorish flat, between Heswall, Barnston, and Irby, about fourteen miles from Chester. It contains 334 acres, valued at £324, and by the census of 1841 it had only 31 inhabitants, occupying the two or three farm houses of which the village is composed.

Pensby is not mentioned in Domesday. The first notice of it is found in a *post mort. inq. temp.*, 21 Richard II., from which it appears probable that the entire township had previously belonged to one Peter Pennesby; but it is known to have been divided in parcels in the 20th Henry VI., when one-third belonged to the hospital of St. John, in Chester, an equal quantity to the Stanleys of Hooton, and a fourth part to the Bolds of Chester. After the dissolution the manor was granted to the dean and chapter of Chester, from whom it passed to the Harpurs; by them it was sold to the Gleggs, of Gayton, and it is now held by John Baskervyle Glegg, of Old Withington, Esq.

#### PRENTON.

The township of Prenton, which is situated at the south-eastern extremity of the parish, contains 624 acres, of the value of £812; inhabited according to the late census, by 110 persons.

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\* The celebrated polemical writer Dr. Richard Sherlock was a native of Oxton, where he was born in 1641. When rector of Winwick he appointed his nephew, Thomas Wilson, to the curacy of New Church in that parish, by the patron of which he finally was appointed to the bishopric of Sodor and Man. Dr. Sherlock bequeathed £50 to purchase 15 cows for the use of the poor of this township, to be placed under similar management to those of Woodchurch.

Prenton is mentioned in the Domesday survey as *Prestune*, and it was then held by Walter de Vernon, the brother to Richard, baron of Shipbrook; but in the reign of Edward III. one of a family that had assumed the local name, William de Prenton, was lord of the manor, which continued in possession of his posterity for several generations.

In the early part of the sixteenth century it passed, by the marriage of the heiress of the Prentons, to the Gleyves or Gleaves, one of whom, was a great benefactor to the parish of Woodchurch: from them it descended to the Hockenhalls, from whose Trustees, and the Mortgagees of their estates, it was purchased in 1782 by the late Joseph Lyon, Esq.; and it is now the property of John Winder Lyon Winder, of Morstead House in the county of Norfolk, and Vaenor Park in the county of Montgomery, Esq.

The old hall of Prenton stood in a sheltered dingle, surrounded with trees of a much larger growth than any in the neighbourhood. Its site is now occupied by a large and respectable stone-built farm house, the lords of Prenton having long since deserted it. The woods in this township were particularly mentioned in Domesday, at the date of which they were of greater extent than any other in the hundred. The houses in the little hamlet are superior to those of a similar class in the adjacent villages.

### THINGWALL.

In this township there are 360 acres, which are valued at £300, and in 1841, it had 76 inhabitants.

*Tuigwelle*, in the Domesday Book, appears as part of the possessions of the Baron of Nantwich. In the reign of Richard II., it was held by the Domvilles, of Brimstage, from whom it passed, through the Hulses and the Troutbecks, to the ancestors of the Earl of Shrewsbury, the present proprietor of the greater part of the township. The other part has descended with the Bidston estate, to Mr. Vyner, of Lincolnshire. In 1662, the manor was claimed by the Earl of Kingston, the Earl of Shrewsbury, and Sir William Stanley, all of whom held lands in the township, and by some arrangement it was divided between the two former, the tenants of Lord Kingston doing service at his court, at Bidston, and those of the Earl of Shrewsbury, attending at that at Raby. There is nothing in Thingwall, which stands high and is almost destitute of trees, deserving the least notice. The land is in general very inferior, interspersed with large masses of red sand-stone, which in many parts is quarried from the surface.



## The Parish of Wallasey.



THE important parish of Wallasey, —the most populous in the hundred excepting Bebington,—comprehends the three townships of Wallasey, Liscard, and Poulton-cum-Seacombe. In these, which contain 3276 acres, valued in the county books at £11,515, there are, according to the last census, 6261 inhabitants. It occupies the north-east angle of the hundred; Liscard laying at the junction of the sea and the Mersey; Poulton-cum-Seacombe at the union of the creek called Wallasey Pool with that river, and between the two, bounded on the north by the sea, is the township of Wallasey, which extends westward to the Leasowe.

There has been much confusion in the orthography of this parish, which in the Domesday survey occurs as *Walea*, and at the period of the compilation of that document the adjacent parish of West Kirkby is called, in the deed of gift of its church, *Cherchebie*. To this, “West” was afterwards prefixed, to distinguish it from Kirkby in Walley, by which this parish was designated until the early part of the thirteenth century, when the name of Walaysegh first occurs. It was invariably called Kirkby in Walleia, in the registers of Lichfield until 1487, when it appears there as Wallasey, the name it yet retains in the Diocesan books. Walley’s Kirk, which frequently occurs, is an evident corruption of Kirkbye in Walleia.

At a very early period Wallasey was a divided rectory, one part of which was held, with various estates in the township, by the prior of Birkenhead, and the other was given by William de Waleya to the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh; at the dissolution these moieties were vested in the bishop of Chester, who is the patron of the rectory. That portion which belonged to the prior of Birkenhead is held under a separate lease from the bishop by the Rev. William Armitstead, the present curate of West Kirkby, but the glebe, rectory house, and appurtenances, are attached to the incumbency, as decreed in Chancery in 1720. The value of the living, according to the *Clergy List* of 1837, is £393; the present Rector is the Rev. Thomas Byrth, D.D., F.S.A.

who was instituted in 1829 on the removal of the Rev. Augustus Campbell A. M. to the Rectory of Liverpool.

The priory of Birkenhead formerly maintained a chaplain in Wallasey, and the chapel at which he officiated is that called "Lees-Kirk" in Bishop Gastrell's *Notitia*, which in this instance is mainly correct, although the information transmitted to the bishop by the rector was derived from Henry Robinson, then schoolmaster of Wallasey, who, in a history of the parish yet remaining in the church chest, details many circumstances upon which the greatest reliance cannot be placed. The bishop in 1720 wrote:

"There were formerly two churches in Wallasey, one called Walley's Kirk, situated in the present church-yard, the foundations of which are yet visible, and Lee's Kirk, near a narrow slip of land still called the Kirk-way; but when one became ruinous and the other wanted a priest, they were both taken down and the present one erected in their stead. Walley gave those lands near the Crook Hey and the meadow adjoining, and the Town Crook Hey, to the high altar and the priest for ever, for a burying place in the chancel belonging to the church. This deed of gift was in the parish church, and read by H. Robinson, schoolmaster, when I received the information."

The present church, which is dedicated to St. Hilary, has been several times rebuilt; the principal part of the present fabric is not above ninety years old. The tower presents a fair specimen of the architectural style that prevailed in the reign of Henry VIII. when it is stated to have been rebuilt; the date, 1530, appears on the tower and in other parts. A chapel at the west end, distinguished by a curious oak ceiling, is evidently of much greater antiquity than any other part of the edifice. The church stands in the most commanding situation in the parish, affording from the tower a prospect of vast extent. There are no monuments of particular interest in the church or church-yard, both of which contain numerous memorials of the fatal effects of the storms by which the banks opposite the parish have been visited.\* The

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\* The sad destruction of human life that occurred in January 1839, when the *Pennsylvania*, *St. Andrew*, *Lockwoods*, and other vessels, were lost on this coast, must be fresh in the memory of all; the greater part of the sufferers, after being taken to *Leasowe Castle* and every exertion used to restore them, were buried in this churchyard. About fifteen years since a number of guineas, apparently fresh from the mint, some coins and gold ornaments, were found on a part of the shore now known as the golden sands, supposed to have come from the strong box of some unfortunate ship that must have foundered with all her crew, as far back as the reign of Charles II, as the few other coins found were also of that time. It is probable that the chest in which they had been contained at length gave way, as they were only to be found for a few days, when they were as palpable to the sight as if they had just been placed there. In the year 1844, *Lady Cust* established, in a small building near the beach, *Dennet's Rocket* apparatus for saving lives from shipwreck, many having been lost within a few yards of assistance for want of means rendering it.

rectory house which stands immediately adjacent the church is a building partly of stone, commenced in 1632, and finished with brick in 1695 by the Rev. Thomas Swinton.\*

There is a Free Grammar School having considerable endowments in the parish, but it has fallen into sad neglect. In 1842, a Committee was appointed by the parishioners in vestry assembled, to inquire into the affairs of the school; from their report it appears the earliest record of the school property is the will of Henry Meols the elder, by which a bequest of £125 was made to the churchwardens for the benefit of the schoolmaster, which would rather imply that a school existed prior to his death, which occurred in 1654. Two years after, Henry Young bequeathed a field to the school, and not many months elapsed before a school-house was built by Henry Meols, son of the before-named, at his own expense. This stood on the west side of the church, close to Wallasey Hall or Manor House, the residence of the Meolse' family, whose arms are over the door, it was removed in 1799. There is an entry in the parish books, in the handwriting of Henry Robinson, the schoolmaster at that time, whose communications to Bishop Gastrell have already been referred to, that the parish or school stock had been expended in the purchase of land; which with a legacy left by the late Rector Briggs, and a schoolmaster's house letting for £26 per year, constitutes the entire property of the schools. Some exchanges of lands were made in 1823 and 1826, under the provisions of the 1st and 2nd George IV. cap. 92; but difficulties having been experienced as to the right of the appointment of the master and the management of the property, the inquiry instituted into the subject in 1842, eventually led to an information in the name of Her Majesty's Attorney-General being filed in the High Court of Chancery, calling upon the Court to declare in whom the trusteeship and and property were vested, and the proceedings are yet pending.

Several donations to the poor, recorded on a tablet in the church, are distributed under the directions of the rector.

The parish is separated from the other part of the hundred by Wallasey Pool and the little river Birken or Birket, which renders the communication very circuitous; this has however been partially remedied by a bridge from Poulton to the opposite

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\* "The original endowment of the rectory has been found in Rome. in the place in which the duplicate of our English endowments are kept, but I do not believe any copy was taken."—*Extracted from information from Bishop Law to the Rev. Augustus Campbell, A.M. and by him obligingly communicated. May, 1845.*

shore of Birkenhead, which was opened in 1843, and the contemplated dock works at the latter will afford further facilities by the erection of another bridge more to the eastward.

An act of parliament has been obtained during the present session, 1845, in which are enactments much similar to those by which the adjacent town of Birkenhead is regulated. A large portion of the township of Wallasey being at some distance from the more densely populated part of the parish, is not included in the provisions of the act.

Various attempts have been made to discover coal, but hitherto without effect. No minerals are known to exist in the parish, which is particularly bare of timber although on both sides of the Birken, large trees are met with whenever the plough or the spade invade the soil to any depth, as also are horns, bones, nuts, and other forest remains.\*

### WALLASEY.

The township of Wallasey contains 1789 acres, of the value of £2339, and in 1818 it had 942 inhabitants.

At the conquest Wallasey was granted to Robert de Rodelent, and after his decease a moiety of the manor was attached to the barony of Halton, as appears from several inquisitions, and particularly from the Feodarium, which was made in the latter part of the reign of Henry VI. when it was held under the barons by Sir Thomas Stanley, and by Henry Litherland. His share soon afterwards merged into that of the Earl of Derby, who, in 1668, disposed of his property in this parish, and the greater part was soon

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\* In the *Diary* of Bishop Cartwright are several entries relative to this parish, in which, as usual, the Right Reverend Prelate appears to have been attentive to his own interests and comforts:—

"On 1st Dec., 1686,—I was sung into the choir in procession, and enthroned by Mr. Dean.

"2nd Dec.—After prayers and sitting in the consistory, Sir Rowland Stanley, Mr. Egerton, Sir Philip Egerton, Mr. Chomley, and ten gentlemen dined with me, and after dinner the Mayor and Alderman brought me a present of eight sugar loaves, one dozen of canary, one dozen of white wine, and two of claret, and were very merry with me till seven at night.

"4th Dec.—Wrote Sergeant Jefferson word that I would renew two lives and change the third, in the moiety of the rectory of Wallasey, to Mr. Edward Wilson, for £80 and an hogshead of claret to be paid to Mr. Lowers.

"6th October, 1687.—I bought the lease of Wallasey from Mrs. Dorothy Brereton, and paid her £20 in hand, and a bill on Sir Edmund Wiseman for £80.

"6th October.—I sealed a lease of Wallasey to my son, John Cartwright, for the use of my wife, Frances Cartwright, and Charles and Thomas."

re-sold by the Earl of Kingston to Sir Robert Vyner, from whom it has descended with the Bidston estates to his representative, Robert Vyner of Gauthby in the county of Lincoln, Esq.

The Egertons of Oulton held a portion of Wallasey, and occasionally occupied Leasowe Castle, which they had purchased from the Stanley family; but their property in this township became much divided, and the last baronet sold the whole of that which remained in his possession to Sir John Tobin of Liverpool, who has also purchased from F. R. Price, Esq. another portion of the manor, supposed to have been attached to the lands of the dissolved priory of Birkenhead.

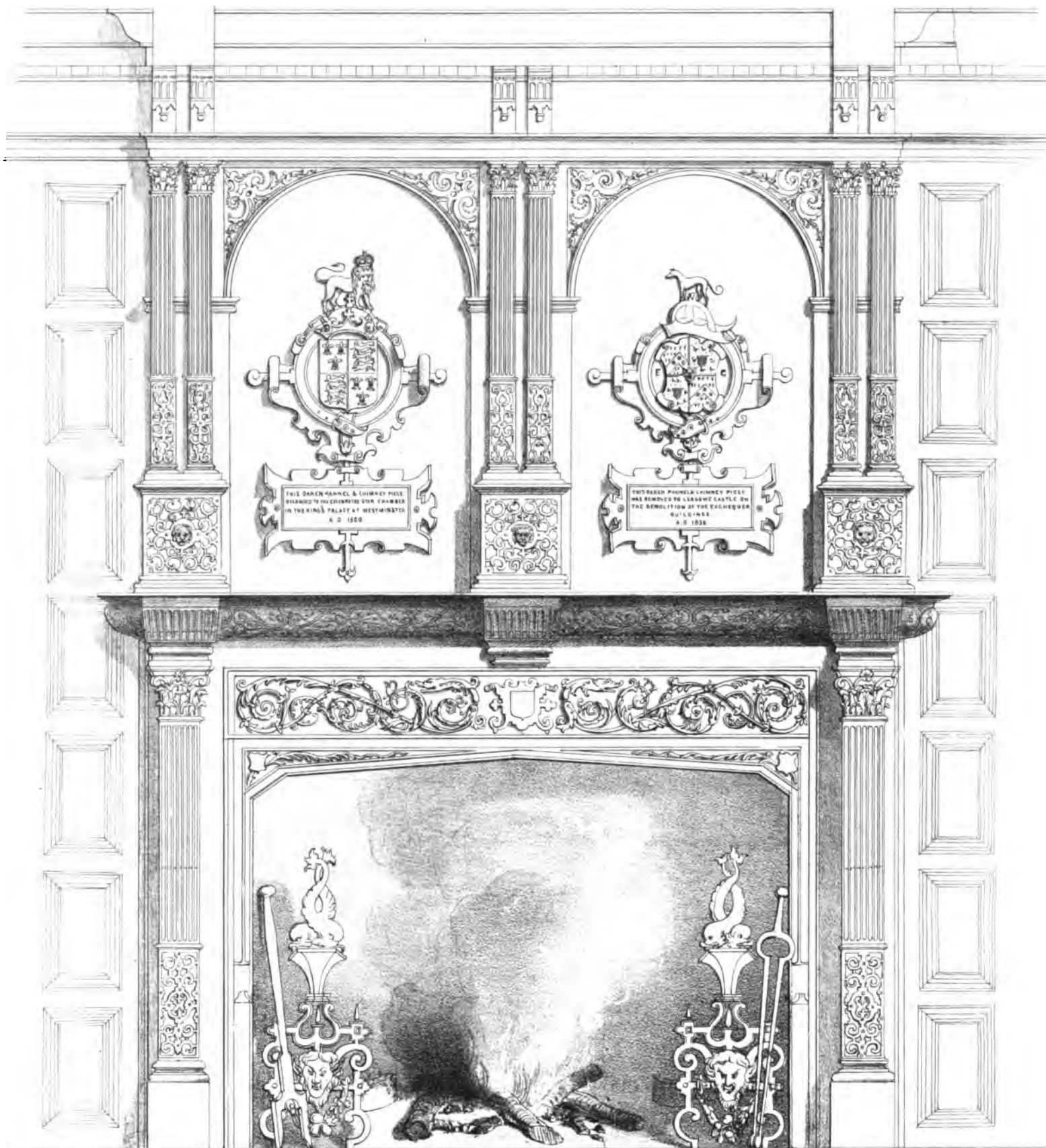
The village of Wallasey, which consists principally of one street, is situated on the summit of an elevated ridge that commands a beautiful view over Bidston and the Leasowes, a level tract of several miles in extent, which commences immediately under the village and reaches to the sea. The inroads of the waters on this coast have been so serious and so constant, as to create the greatest alarm for the safety of the low lands, which are below the level of the sea at the highest spring tides. The Leasowe Lighthouse has been twice withdrawn inland; and the ruins of an ancient church or cemetery have been discovered on the banks, at low water, upwards of a mile from the present lighthouse. To prevent the threatened inundation, which, whilst it would have destroyed much land, would by forcing its way in the course of the Birket, into the Mersey, in all probability have seriously affected the port of Liverpool, the landowners in Wallasey and the Corporation of that town obtained an act, in the year 1829, to erect an embankment against the sea. The work, which is faced with stone embedded in blue clay, extends westward from the castle for nearly two miles, and is a very effective structure reflecting great credit on the skill of Francis Giles, Esq. C. E. under whose direction it has been constructed, at an expense of about £20,000.

Leasowe Castle,\* built in the year 1593, and then called the NEW HALL, was originally intended as a racing box, if the term may be applied to a building of so ancient a date. It was erected by Ferdinando Earl of Derby, but was alienated soon

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\* It was for many years called Mockbeggar Hall, which is a very ancient sailors' nickname for a large lone house, and it is a name accordingly found along the entire shore of the kingdom; or it may have been derived from the original appellation of the coast, which it yet retains to the entrance of the Mersey, but it does not occur in any of the title deeds as ever having been the name of this mansion at any period.





GUNNEY PIECE FROM THE ANCIENT  
**STAR CHAMBER**  
 REMOVED FROM THE ROYAL PALACE AT WESTMINSTER, TO  
 LEASOWE CASTLE.

after his death, with a moiety of the manor of Wallasey, to the Egertons of Oulton, by whom it was retained until 1784, when the grandfather of the present baronet died in the house, which he had bequeathed to his widow. It was afterwards sold to the widow of the late \*Lewis William Boode, Esq. who left it to its present proprietor, the lady of the Hon. Colonel Sir Edward Cust, K.C.H. The building originally consisted of an octagonal tower, with square turrets on the alternate faces; in 1818 considerable additions were made by Mrs. Boode from the plans of Foster of Liverpool, and great alterations have subsequently been made by the present proprietor, whereby the Castle is now of considerable extent. It is a very decorative stone building containing several handsome apartments, among which is one that has been fitted up with the oak pannelling that formerly covered the walls of the celebrated Star Chamber at Westminster. This was purchased by Sir Edward Cust, with the other remains of that once infamous court, upon the demolition of the old Exchequer Buildings, in 1836. The fittings are of oak, and the introduction of the pomegranate among the other badges of the Tudors in the decoration of the ceiling, fixes their date to the reign of Henry VIII., for this badge was borne by none of the family except by that monarch, and by him only during the lifetime of Queen Katherine of Arragon. The throne, of which the back pannel exists, is from its style probably of an earlier date; perhaps of the time of Henry VII., as the court was established by an act passed in the early part of his reign. The chimney-piece, a very decorative specimen of the time in which it was erected, is correctly delineated in the opposite sketch. In the drawing-room are full-length portraits of King George III. and Queen Charlotte, by Lawrence, the gift of King

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\* This lamented lady, whose humanity and beneficence were proverbial, and whose memory still lives among many who have suffered shipwreck on these shores, was the victim of an accident by which she lost her life, in 1826. An elegant gothic cross erected on an elevation at the turn of the road from Poulton to Wallasey, refers to this event, which is recorded in the following inscription, inserted on a stone in the wall beneath :—

Near this spot Mrs. Boode of Leasowe Castle was killed by a  
fall from her pony-carriage, April 21st, 1826.  
May ye who pass by respect this memorial of an awful dispensation,  
And the affectionate tribute of an only child,  
To perpetuate her dear mother's memory  
Beyond the existence of that breast  
Which will never cease to cherish it.  
Ah! may the sad remembrance  
Which attaches to this spot  
Impress on every one this salutary warning,  
"In the midst of life we are in death."



William IV. and a picture of William III. reviewing his troops on the Leasowe, previously to their embarking on the expedition which terminated in the battle of the Boyne. There is also a very ancient picture of a horse-race that occurred here in the days of James I. including portraits of that monarch and his sons, sharing in the sport, in which also a lady, in a carriage driven by servants in the royal livery, participates.

The Wallasey Leasowe was probably the oldest gentleman's race-course in the kingdom, being noticed by Webb as existing in the early part of the seventeenth century. (*See Appendix, 13.*) The races at the Rood-eye at Chester, or at Smithfield and other places, were comparatively the sports of a mere fair, and could offer no rivalry to the aristocratic amusements of the Leasowe course, which in 1683 had rather an illustrious jockey, in the person of the famous Duke of Monmouth. Attended by a great retinue of gentry, the duke was on a tour, courting popularity, in the western counties. At Chester he condescended to become sponsor to the daughter of the mayor of that city, and, amid the festivities attendant on that event, hearing that the principal families of the county had assembled at the Wallasey races, he went thither and rode a race himself, which he won, and presented the prize to his infant god-daughter.\*

In addition to the high antiquity and noble jockeyship of the Leasowe race-course, it also claims to have once offered the highest prize in the kingdom; for in 1721 the great families of the west entered into an agreement to subscribe liberally for a sweepstake to be run for ten seasons on this course. In conformity with this arrangement the Grosvenors, Stanleys, Cholmondeleys, Egertons, Wynnes, and some others, subscribed twenty guineas each annually, and undertook to bring their own horses to contest the stakes. The last of these races occurred in 1732; they were then removed to Newmarket, where for many years "the Wallasay Stake" formed a leading prize: but the Leasowe continued to be a trial or training course until the middle of the last century. An old building in the village of Wallasey, said to have been the Grosvenor stables yet exists, on the doors of which the horses' plates remained until within a very few years.

For a considerable period Wallasey was a somewhat formidable rival to Liverpool,

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\* It is said that after winning the race he offered the opposing jockey his revenge in a race on foot, and having again succeeded, he wished to run the man in his boots; but all this was cunningly devised to conceal the weightier designs of his visit, for while the Duke was thus racing on Wallasey Leasowe, his subtle advisers were engaged in secret council with the heads of their party at Bidston.—*See ante, p. 203-4.*

not only in its commercial intercourse, but in the quantity of its shipping, which consisted of about one-fourth of the number then belonging to Liverpool.\*

### POULTON-CUM-SEACOMBE.

This township, more generally called Seacombe, contains 646 acres, and is valued in the county books at £4905. It has partaken of the general improvement of the shores of the Mersey opposite Liverpool, for although it had in 1811 only 214 inhabitants, the last census exhibited a return of 2446 persons.

Poulton is not mentioned in the Domesday Book, but it is very probable that it was attached at an early period to the manor of Liscard, as certain lands yet pay a quit rent to the Fee of Halton, although it does not appear that paramount rights were ever exercised by that barony over Poulton. Several inquisitions of the date of Henry VI. shew that a part of the manor of Poulton with that of Seacombe, was then held by the Houghs of Leighton, under the Pooles; and in the 27th Elizabeth, Alicia wife of William Whitmore of Leighton was found heiress on the death of William de Hough of Leighton. The pedigree is more clear from 1693, when the manorial estate was vested in Thomas Meolse of Chester, and William Whitmore of Thurstanston, by whom the manor was divided, and from whom the estates were bought by James Gordon, Esq. He was succeeded by his son, who died at an extreme old age in 1774, having devised the estate to the late Rear Admiral Smith, whose grandson, Richard Smith of Urswick in the county of Lancaster, Esq., is the present proprietor and lord of the manor.

Poulton-cum-Seacombe forms the southern part of Wallasey Parish, and being bounded on the east and south sides by the Mersey, and on the west by Wallasey Pool, which affords ample facility for coasting and other trading vessels, it is admirably adapted to participate in the prosperity of the opposite shores of Lancashire and the neighbouring town of Birkenhead; indeed the greater part of the water front is already included within the limits of the Act for making docks, obtained in the session of 1844 by the Commissioners of that town.

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\* Although it is more probable that Poulton was the town referred to by the old annalists, and not Wallasey, as the description given by Leland, of the "village on the very shore where men use much to Salte Hering taken at the mouth of Mersey" seems to imply the former was the place of trade. An official record exists, of the date of 1565, when Liverpool had twelve vessels, of the total burthen of 175 tons only, navigated by 75 men; and at the same time Wallasey had three vessels, of the burthen of 40 tons and 14 men.

At the south-east angle of the township stands the ancient Ferry of Seacombe, and also the Hotel, an extensive building, which has deservedly obtained a high reputation among its numerous summer visitors, and the *gourmands* of Liverpool. The rapid tide occasioned by the indent of Wallasey Pool, rendered the landing inconvenient until the erection of a stage, of a very uncommon construction, worked by means of a moveable steam-engine, upon a railway. The Ferry, which is the property of Mr. Smith, the lord of the manor,\* is well supplied with steam-boats. It is attached to the Hotel, which is furnished with a bowling-green, a billiard-room, and every accommodation. To the left or south of the ferry, a row of pleasant houses now face the Mersey; they are situated on a slight elevation, not much more than sufficient to prevent the water from reaching them; but the intended Dock works will make considerable alterations in this part of the township.

To the north from the Ferry,† along the shore, which is crested with elegant houses, at the extreme point of the township and in a very prominent situation, stands Egremont Hotel, to and from which steam-boats regularly ply to Liverpool. The flourishing village of Egremont was founded in 1829, when the neighbourhood consisted entirely of fields which are now covered with good and handsome houses. This Ferry, held under a lease from the Woods and Forests, has recently been purchased by John Fletcher of Toxteth Park, Liverpool, Esq., who, with the consent of the Crown has commenced alterations at the landing stages, by which it is expected the facility of embarkation will be greatly increased, and the Ferry rendered equal to any at this part of the Mersey. The Hotel is on a very extensive scale, and replete with every convenience. Church street, Egremont, which runs due west from the river, dividing Seacombe from Liscard, is of considerable width, containing many excellent buildings. It is fronted on the west by a new stone church, from which turning to the south and west, at a distance of about half a mile, is the Pool, on the shores of which are several manufacturing chemical works and a large establishment for roasting copper ores.

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\* Several trials took place on this subject in 1816 and 1817, when different verdicts were given, but ultimately the result was in favour of Mr. Smith. The claim of the Rev. James Mainwaring, who holds much property in the township, and whose claim was partially recognized in the Enclosure Acts, was abandoned, and no paramount rights are now exercised, except that one, namely, the Ferry at Seacombe.

† Seacombe Ferry is distant from the Seacombe Basin, Prince's Pier, Liverpool, six furlongs; and Egremont is one mile and three furlongs from the same.

Poulton, which lays a mile up Wallasey Pool, from its situation in a small cove interspersed with flourishing trees, and the rural simplicity of its houses, forms a pleasing contrast with the activity and bustle displayed at the ferries, and the bleak and dreary country of the adjacent townships. An embankment has been made into the Pool from this village, which by a neat bridge is connected with a road formed across the marshes to Birkenhead, whereby the communication is facilitated, and the distance shortened several miles. Within the space thus described are several excellent houses and some of extreme elegance, though none more particularly requiring notice.

Considerable improvements have recently been made in the roads of this township; a new one has been constructed connecting the ferry with the bridge, and another which intersects the town. Many new houses are now building, and Seacombe throughout manifests great prosperity. The parish Church being at Wallasey, the inhabitants of this township generally avail themselves of that at Liscard. There is a Free Infant-School connected with the established Church, and also a Wesleyan chapel to which a school is attached. Arrangements are now making for the erection of an additional church in this part of the parish, where it is much wanted, and the increasing population will soon require another more to the northward.

### LISCARD

The township of Liscard contains 841 acres valued in the county books at £4271. The population, which in 1801 was only 211, occupying 43 houses, by the late census was returned at 2873 persons.

The manor of Liscard, which is not mentioned in the Domesday survey, first occurs in the feodary of Halton, *temp.* Edward I. when, under the name of *Listark*, it was held by Richard de Aston under the barons of Halton. It afterwards passed to the ancient family of Melas or Meolse, by whom it had previously been held under the Astons. The last of the Meolses, on the extinction of the male line, in 1739, bequeathed the manor to the Houghs; and finally, in 1804, it was sold by the executors of that family to the late John Penketh, Esq., and by the marriage of his daughter and heiress to John Dennil Maddock, Esq., the manor became vested in him. An acknowledgement of the paramount right of the fee of Halton is yet chargeable upon some of the old tenements in the township.

The ancient hamlet of Liscard has not kept pace with the improvements that

distinguish most of the neighbourhood; it remains in that neat and quiet state in which it has been for many years, although there has been some slight increase even in the village. But in several parts of the township settlements have latterly been made, in which every effort of modern taste has been successfully used to add elegance to a district for which nature had previously done little. With the exception of the village, a few small hovels—the abode of fishermen and boatmen, and a range of low cottages, which from being used for storing gunpowder were distinguished by the name of “The Magazines,”\* Liscard was nearly a blank; there were not more than two or at most three respectable houses in the township. At present Church Street forms the extreme south side, running westward from the river at the new ferryhouse of Egremont. From this street to the fort at the north-east point of the parish, a distance of two miles, the shore is studded with elegant houses, placed on a ridge of land which abruptly rises from the bank of the Mersey, while many of the more choice situations, even among the sandhills, have been selected for neat detached villas. These are in many instances well sheltered with foliage, and from the facility of access here, have become the residences of many opulent families from Liverpool. Above all, New Brighton requires particular notice. In the year 1830 the late James Atherton, an eminent merchant of Liverpool, conceived the magnificent design of founding an extensive watering place at the north-east angle of this township, and in furtherance of his plan purchased one hundred and seventy acres of that which was then a mere heap of sand-hills; but nature, so far as regarded scenery and local attractions, had done wonders towards the adaptation of the ground to the purposes of a marine residence. Rising out of the sea by a succession of lofty ridges it offered an inducement for the erection of villas, retreating one above another, without the view from the upper ranges being in the slightest degree intercepted, by the houses below them. The convex semicircular form of the coast, presenting one front to the Mersey and another to the open sea, ranging eastward over the town of Liverpool, Waterloo, Formby, Blackcombe, and even to the Old Man of Conistone, and westward to the Ormsheads, the Welsh mountains, and a part of Cheshire

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\* These extensive Magazines have existed for upwards of a century without the slightest accident. They consist of separate chambers perfectly detached from each other, the intervening space being filled with earth, and the whole enclosed with a strong wall, this is again belted with a thick plantation, and the whole surrounded with a lofty wall; so that all chance of communication is prevented. The internal regulations, which contain all that ingenuity could devise to ensure safety, are strictly enforced, and no admittance, on any pretence, allowed to any except the regular attendants.

and Flintshire, embraces a field of vision truly grand and picturesque, to which must be added on the north, all the variety arising from the numerous vessels and craft of every description that are continually passing, as they enter or depart from Liverpool.

The works were prosecuted with the greatest vigour, and the effect of the industry and enterprize there displayed is very striking. Streets, fifteen yards in width, and nearly a mile in extent, ascend from both shores and intersect each other at right angles, the whole being laid out on a regular and symmetrical plan. A good pier with the requisite landing stages was erected, and also an Hotel combining every accommodation for the occasional visitor, as well as for those who may prefer to make it their temporary residence. There are separate establishments for hot and cold baths, exclusive of the facility which the shore, so admirably adapted for sea bathing, affords. Capacious stabling and all the convenience which comfort, or even luxury, can require, are either built or in progress, and tend to shew the gigantic nature of the project, and the spirit with which it has been pursued. The pier is about two miles and three-quarters from the Seacombe basin, at the south end of the Prince's pier, Liverpool, to and from which, steam-packets ply hourly. Among the villas particularly distinguished by external elegance, that of Mr. Rowson of Prescott stands pre-eminent as a picturesque and pleasing object, whether viewed from the land side or from the sea shore. The grounds are laid out with extreme beauty and taste, and the spectator is surprized at the luxuriance of the foliage in the valley or recess between the hills and the land-front of the house. Nearly adjacent to this, is the extensive mansion of Joseph Christopher Ewart of Liverpool, Esq.

The building of these ornamental residences continues, and the young colony of New Brighton promises to be, at no distant day, one of the most fashionable watering places in this part of the kingdom. Few can boast of greater facility of access, while, in addition to good roads, it possesses the advantage of a locality within three miles from a railway terminus, together with steam-packets plying every hour between this delightful village and Liverpool.

Turning at the fort to the westward, a pleasant walk upon the sands under the cliffs that abruptly rise from the beach, leads to the lower lands of Wallasey, at the commencement of which the Leasowe lighthouse and embankment attract notice. But leaving Wallasey to the right, and proceeding inland from the shore through Liscard village, many excellent houses of every form and description present themselves, some exhibiting a great style of splendour and magnificence.

A large Church, of the Grecian order of architecture, dedicated to St. John, stands immediately fronting Church street, Egremont, about half a mile from the shore. It was erected a few years since by a joint subscription in shares of £100 each, and is now the Property of the shareholders, its affairs being managed by trustees chosen out of their body: it contains sittings for 2000 persons. The Rev. John Tobin, A.M. the present incumbent, resides at an extensive and elegant stone mansion adjacent to the Church, erected by his father, Sir John Tobin, knt., who, upon retiring from active business in Liverpool, where for many years he had been an eminent merchant and shipowner, fixed his residence in this parish, on a property which he purchased from F. R. Price, Esq. of Bryn-y-pys, consisting of the lands formerly held by the prior of Birkenhead in Wallasey. The large and elegant Independent Chapel in Liscard, erected in 1842, by John Astley Marsden of Liverpool, Esq., was presented by him to trustees appointed by the congregation. It is situated on a commanding eminence, with a lofty tower, and possessing very much the appearance of a church. The Roman Catholics and the Primitive Methodists have also Chapels in this township.

The magistrates hold a petty sessions here for the business of this and some of the neighbouring townships. Much inconvenience had long been experienced from the want of a lock-up or prison, there being none nearer than Birkenhead, a distance from some parts of this parish of five or six miles; and prisoners were frequently confined in the houses of the constables, or even of the justices, until their final commitment. At the Midsummer General Sessions of 1843, a grant of £400 was made towards the erection of a prison, which has been completed by private subscription, although its cost is upwards of £1200.

At the extreme north-east point of the township, at New Brighton, on a ledge of rocks which project some distance into the sea, is an admirably constructed Lighthouse which rises 90 feet above the level of the rock. It is built with remarkably hard stone, brought from Anglesey, on a plan similar to that adopted by Smeaton, in the construction of the Eddystone. Every stone was worked and dovetailed into the next; each superincumbent course of masonry was firmly united to the previous course by iron braces; and the whole afterwards compacted together by a liquid cement of puzzalano imported from the Neapolitan states. The masonry is perfectly solid to the height of 35 feet, when a spiral staircase commences that leads to the chambers of the keepers, and to the lanterns, which exhibit a revolving light of intense brilliancy. It was erected by the Corporation of Liverpool in 1830, at a cost of about £35,000.

Immediately in the rear of the lighthouse stands a Fort, presenting not only an excellent structure for defence, but also an interesting object at the entrance of the river. The form of the fort is that of a trapezoid, having a circular tower at each of the angles, and covering a surface of about 4000 square yards. The west or principal face is mounted with six long 32-pounders, exclusive of two others mounted upon swivels on the flank towers. There are in all eighteen guns, which as the channel is not half a mile wide, completely command the entrance of the port; though it is probable the best defences are the dangerous shoals and sands, which, extending for miles, shift their position almost every spring-tide, and cannot be passed without the assistance of experienced pilots, and the aid of buoys and sea-marks. In the interior of the fort are barracks, capable of receiving one hundred men, with apartments for the officers, kitchens, store rooms, &c. There are also magazines, furnaces, and the other usual appliances of warfare. Cisterns are constructed to receive rain water in case of need, but there is a very singular spring of excellent water, considerably below the range of the tides, from which an inexhaustible supply can be obtained on the recession of the tide. The fort is completely insulated at high-water; heavy seas frequently break against the north-east and north-west fronts, causing the spray to rise upwards of fifty feet, but it is thrown off by a strong course of projecting masonry. It was erected in 1827, from designs by the late Capt. Kitson of the Royal Engineers.

#### BLACON-CUM-CRABWALL.

This township, the greater part of which is in the parish of St. Oswald in Chester, and the remainder in that of the Holy Trinity, contains 1112 acres, valued for the county assessment at £1295, and by the late census it contained 60 inhabitants.

In the Doomsday Book *Blacheholl* is noticed as being held by Ranulphus des Mesnilwarin, the ancestor of the Cheshire family of the Mainwarings, on whom it was conferred at the conquest; and it presents the remarkable instance of an estate situate near a populous town, at a considerable distance from the residence of its proprietors, passing, with only two alienations, in direct descent from that remote period to the present day.

The estates of the Mainwarings vested, *temp.* 17 Edward I., in Maude their heiress, who marrying a Trussel of Cubbleston conveyed it to that family, with whom



it continued until the marriage of their heiress Elizabeth, who succeeded on the death of her brother John, a minor, *temp.* 22 Henry VII., when it passed to Edward Vere, Earl of Oxford, from whom it was purchased, with Barthomley, &c. by Sir Christopher Hatton. His grandson sold the manor and estates of Blacon to Sir Randle Crewe, Lord Chief Justice, and they are at present the property of his descendant, Hungerford Lord Crewe.

Blacon is curiously situated about three miles north-west from the city of Chester, being partly on the precipitous banks which formed the north-east bound of the Dee when it flowed to the city walls, and the other portion is composed of land recovered by embankments from the ancient bed of the river. The township, which is in a high state of cultivation, contains several excellent houses.

The ancient hall of Blacon is now used as a farm house, as also is that of CRABHALL formerly the seat of the Gamuls. The hamlet of Crabhall or Crabwall was given by Thomas de Mainwaring, nephew of the Norman grantee, to John de Erneway, paying one penny per year for secular service.\* By him it was presented to the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh, to whom his donations were so liberal that the monks undertook for ever to provide two chaplains who should daily say mass for his soul and that of Margery his wife; one to officiate at St. Leonard's altar in the Abbey-church, and the other in the church of St. Bridget; which services were to be performed to the due satisfaction of the mayor of Chester, on whose complaint of neglect the future abbots were to be responsible to the Diocesan. Crabwall continued part of the possessions of the abbey until the dissolution, after which it came into the hands of the Gamuls, a family of considerable civic respectability, with whom it remained during several generations. When in 1750 the male line became extinct by the death of William Gamul, Crabwall was divided between his three daughters, who severally bequeathed their interests in favour of William Gamul Farmer of Chester, Esq., with whose representatives it remains.

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\* "Salva custodia vadi de Dee, sicut custodini solet tempore guerre."

## Birkenhead and Claughton.



THE great and important alterations and improvements that are taking place in these two rising and interesting townships, rendered it desirable to delay all reference to them until the approaching termination of the Session of Parliament afforded the means of ascertaining which of the many projects before the legislature, by which they were affected, would be adopted.

As Claughton is now for several purposes amalgamated with Birkenhead, the future history of the latter will, as heretofore, in a great measure include that of

### CLAUGHTON-CUM-GRANGE.

This township contains 575 acres, valued in the county books at £312, being at a lower rate per acre than any other in the hundred; according to the census of 1841 it had only 240 inhabitants, a number which is now greatly increased, there being nearly one hundred houses rated in the overseer's books for 1845.

There is no mention of Claughton in Doomsday; it is, however, presumed to have formed part of the ancient barony of Dunham, as the possessions of the Masseys are known to have been considerable in Wirral, although Puddington alone is mentioned in the great survey. The manor of Claughton was unquestionably attached to the priory of Birkenhead soon after its foundation, and it occurs in some early pleadings when, *temp.* Edward III., the Prior sustained the right of the tenants of his ancient manor of *Clocton*, to certain privileges which had been disputed. In all subsequent enumerations of the estates of the convent, Claughton is included among the possessions of the priory; and in consequence of a part of the township being appropriated to a great enclosure, in which were the barns, stables, and other requisites and offices necessary for their farming operations, as also the residence of their *Grangiarus*, or land-bailiff, the Grange was especially attached to Claughton. After the dissolution, the manor and lands, under the denomination of Claughton-cum-Grange, were granted by Henry VIII., with Birkenhead and the other estates of the priory, to Ralph Worsley, from whom by heirship, bequest, sale, and other devolutions,—which will be more fully

detailed in the history of that township,—the manor has descended to William Jackson, of the Manor-house, and of Birkenhead, Esq.

## Ancient Birkenhead.

The conquest of England was far from achieved at the battle of Hastings. The territory then won did not comprise one-fourth of the kingdom. The wars of William in the west and north were protracted for upwards of seven years, and even then, although most of the principal towns had been carried by the Norman troops, the country was far from being securely held by them. The Conqueror, who was eminently religious according to the notions of his day, immediately after his victory over Harold, founded the Abbey of Battel; and he strictly enjoined his followers to imitate his example by the erection and endowment of monasteries in the fair lands he so lavishly conferred upon them. It has already been shewn, (p. 61,) that the earldom of Chester, being deemed of too great importance to remain in abeyance after Walter de Gherbaud, one of William's most favoured barons, had retired to Flanders, was granted by the Conqueror to his nephew, Hugues, the son of Gosse d'Avranches, who, under the cognomen of Hugh Lupus, is generally styled the first palatinate Earl of Chester. Enjoying an almost regal dignity, he selected eight, from among his principal retainers, who formed a local parliament, to which was confided the custody and the interests of the County; yet it was long ere Cheshire attained such a state of tranquillity as permitted his councillors to devote their attention to its ecclesiastical affairs. Thirty years elapsed before Lupus, who had expelled the monks that previously occupied the convent of St. Werburgh, suffering under severe illness, invited his old chaplain Anselm, abbot of Bec, to assist him in the foundation of a Benedictine house, on the site of that of the expelled seculars.

The continued aggressions of their ever vigilant and rapacious neighbours fully occupied the immediate attention of his successors, and the barons of Cheshire, who experienced no little difficulty in retaining the land conferred upon them, restricted their religious benefactions for a long period to the great abbey of Chester. But in the twelfth century, which has been called "the paradisaical æra of monachism," the barons

appear to have participated in the zeal, by which that period was so pre-eminently distinguished, for the establishment of religious houses. And following the example of the barons of Nantwich and of Halton, who had severally built and endowed the monasteries of Combermere and of Halton, Hamon de Massie the third baron of Dunham Massey, in or about the year 1153,\* founded a priory for sixteen monks of the regular order of St. Benedict, at Birkenhead, on a property, which although not named in the Domesday survey, is proved by various fines, inquisitions, and other documents, to have been part of the original barony of Dunham. There are no records or traditions to assist in forming an opinion of the reasons which induced the patron to fix the convent in a situation so dissimilar to those generally selected for monastic institutions. But it must be borne in mind, that the present denuded state of the neighbouring country is very different to that of the period of the foundation of the priory. Instead of being almost entirely divested of wood, it was then well timbered, and in the immediate vicinity was a greater number of ecclesiastical edifices than in any other rural district of equal extent in this part of the kingdom. There were churches at Bromborough, Bidston, Upton, Poulton, Moreton, Wallasey, and most probably at Landican; there were also hospitals and other minor establishments, which might together render Birkenhead a more eligible site, than it otherwise would have been, for a convent,—the inhabitants of which were governed by rules by no means so severe as those of their ascetic neighbours, the Cistercians of Stanlaw abbey.

The priory was dedicated to St. Mary and St. James, and had considerable endowments, among which may be enumerated the rectories of Backford and Bidston, together with lands in those townships, and in Moreton, Claughton, Tranmere, Over Bebington, and Saughall Massie. The barons of Dunham long continued their benefactions in support of the monastery of Birkenhead. Hamon the fifth baron presented them with the advowson and vicarage of Bowdon; and with the manor of

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\* Though there is some difficulty in fixing the precise date of the foundation of the Priory, there can be none in showing that almost every writer upon the subject has hitherto been incorrect. Dr. Lee, in the *Vale Royal*, fixes the date at 1250, and he seems to have been almost invariably copied; and this year having also been repeated by Mr. Ormerod, (although the "error of the printer" was corrected in an appendix,) was adopted by Henshall and others. But it must be wrong, for the name of Oliver, Prior of Birkenhead, occurs in the reign of King John, who died in 1216; and even Gervais of Canterbury, who wrote *temp.* Richard I. (1189–99), mentions Birkenhead in his List of Religious Houses. Clearly Lee was also in error, in ascribing the foundation to Hamon, the fifth baron of Dunham. The confusion has most probably arisen from mistaking the grant of Bowdon, by Hamon the fifth baron, for the original foundation by the third baron.

Davenham, which they sold to the barons of Shipbrook for seventy marks; other minor properties were conferred upon them by various donors, among which were the moiety of the rectory of Wallasey, and a large estate in that parish. A presentation to the rectory of Backford occurs in the episcopal register at Lichfield, in 1305, after which for nearly two centuries seven rectors in uninterrupted succession were appointed by the prior. Nor were their estates in Cheshire alone. By a *post mort.* inquisition, 26 Edward I., taken at Walton, upon the death of the Lord Edward, the brother of Henry III., it was found that the priory held fifteen acres of land in the manor of West Derby; and the valuation of their property at the dissolution, shew they had estates in different parts of Lancashire.

The attempted annexation of Ireland to England, in the reign of Henry II. caused a material increase in the communication between the two countries; and as the march of troops through the mountainous passes of Wales was almost impossible, the numerous levies from the north required to keep the Irish in subjection, assembled in the counties, of Lancaster and Chester. The intricate and dangerous entrance of the Mersey caused the transports generally to resort to Dawpool, on the eastern shore of the Dee, and consequently led to much travelling across the hundred of Wirral. This, as there were no houses of entertainment in Birkenhead, would be no small tax on the hospitality of the priory; and it was probably to meet this expense, unexpectedly thrown upon their convent, that the vicarage of Bowdon was given to them, as it was one of the most valuable incumbencies in the country; "our common proverb," says Sir Peter Leycester, "is, 'every man is not born to be vicar of Bodon.'"

The following is a copy of the grant as it appears in Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum*, under the head of **Birkenedense**.

"Omnibus Christi fidelibus hoc præsens scriptum visuris vel audituris: HAMO MASSIE, filius et hæres HAMONIS quarti, salutem in Domino. NOVERIT universitas vestra me, pro salute animæ meæ et animarum antecessorum meorum, dedisse, concessisse, et hac presenti carta, mea confirmasse, et pro me et hæredibus meis omnino quietam clammasse Deo et Beatæ Mariæ et Sancto Jacobo, et Priori et Conventui de Birkened ibidem Deo servientibus, in puram et perpetuam eleemosynam, dimidiam acram terræ in Donham, videlicet, illam quæ jacet inter selionem ecclesiæ de Bowdon, et selionem Johannis prepositi de Donham, et unam acram terræ ingold \* \* \* \* \* Lacheke, ad caput crofti Johannis filii bondi Thomæ le Criar, una cum advocacione et donatione ecclesiæ de Bowdon, cum omnibus pertinentiis; HABENDUM et tenendum prædictis Priori et Conventui, eorum

successoribus in perpetuum: Hic testibus, Domino Gonselino de Badalesmere justiciario Cestriae, D'no Symone tunc abbate Sanctae Werburgae Cestrensis. Dominis Uriano de S'to Petro, Petro de Arderne, Patricio de Heselwall, Rogero Domvyle, Godfrido Clerico, Richardo de Massy, tunc vice-comite Cestrensi, Willielmo Lancelyn, Roberto de Pulle, Bertramo de Mell, et multis aliis.\*

The other possessions and immunities of the prior are fully exemplified in his answer to a *quo warranto* information issued against him, *temp.* 27 Edward III., at the suit of William Braas, relative to the ferry across the Mersey, one of the most valuable privileges attached to the convent. The first charter granted was by Edward the Second, permitting the erection of houses for the accommodation of travellers detained at the priory. It may be found among the records of the Court of Chancery, in the patent roll of the eleventh year of his reign; but being defective, further letters patent were issued, of which the following is a correct translation:—

EDWARD, by the Grace of God, King of England, Lord of Ireland, and Duke of Aquitaine. To all to whom the present letters shall come, GREETING: Know ye that, whereas, from the town of Liverpool in the County of Lancaster unto the Priory of Birkenhed in the County of Chester, and from the same priory into the aforesaid town beyond the arm of the sea there, a common passage is used, and on account of contrariety of weather and frequent storms, great numbers of persons wishing to cross there from the said county of Chester into parts of the county of Lancaster, being often hindered, it hath hitherto been necessary to turn aside to the said priory, by reason that at the passage aforesaid there are not any houses for lodging such persons; nor can any provisions be there found to be bought for the support of the said persons; on account whereof, the said Priory hath hitherto been burthened beyond its means, and the aforesaid persons have been very much wearied and grieved: WE, willing in this behalf to apply a remedy, of our special grace, have granted and given license, for us and our heirs, as much as in us lies, to our beloved in Christ, the Prior and Convent of Birkened, at the place of the passage aforesaid, or as near as shall most conveniently be done, to build sufficient houses for lodging such persons; and the same being built may hold to them and their successors for ever, and that the persons who shall dwell in the same houses may buy and sell provisions for the support of the men there, about to cross the said arm of the sea, without the hindrance or impediment of us, or our heirs, Justices, Escheators, Sheriffs, or other Bailiffs or Ministers whatsoever. In testimony whereof, WE have caused these our letters to be made patent. Witness Ourselves at Shene, the twentieth day of February, in the eleventh year of our reign. (1318.)

\* Although the date is not given it may be identified by the fact that Badalesmere was Chief Justice to Edward I. from 1275 to 1282; and more particularly by Richard de Massie having been Sheriff, 6 Edward I. (1278.)

These are the first known deeds in which the ferry across the Mersey is mentioned; but it will be perceived that the permission granted to the prior was confined to the erection of houses for the accommodation of travellers, and the sale of provisions to them; in a word, to the building and keeping of an inn. The much greater source of profit, the right of ferryage from Birkenhead to Lancashire, was not conferred upon the priory until the fourth year of King Edward III., when it was granted to the prior and convent by letters patent yet preserved in the rolls of Chancery, of which the following is a copy :—

EDWARD, &c. greeting: We have inspected letters patent of the Lord Edward, late King of England, our Father, in these words, (*reciting the previous grants*): And We, the grant aforesaid holding firm and valid, the same, for us and our heirs as much as in us lies, do grant and confirm to the aforesaid Prior and Convent, and their successors, as the letters aforesaid reasonably witness. AND, being willing to do more ample favour unto those desirous for their advantage to cross the water there, We have granted, for us and our heirs, to the aforesaid Prior and Convent, that they and their successors for ever, may have there a passage beyond the said arm of the sea, as well for men as for horses, and other things whatsoever; and for the same passage may receive as shall be deemed reasonable, without the hindrance or impediment of us, or our heirs, or our ministers whomsoever, saving our right, and the right of any other person whomsoever. In testimony, &c. Witness the King, at Woodstock, this thirteenth day of April. (1332.) By writ of Privy Seal.

The exclusive right of Ferry from Birkenhead, which must not be confounded with that *from* Liverpool, which had previously been granted to others, was thus unquestionably given to the prior. But doubts appear to have arisen as to what should be deemed a reasonable toll, to determine which, he was summoned before the court of the Earl at Chester in 1354, at the instance of William Braas, and required not only to defend the charge, but to substantiate his right to several privileges which he claimed.

In his answer, which may be found on the roll of the County Pleas for that year, the Prior claimed for himself, the monks, their convent, and their beasts, common of pasture and turbary in Bidston, Moreton, and Saughall; to hold a Court for the manor of Claughton; a right of common for his cattle, and those of his tenants, at all times, in Tranmere, and a right of exemption from the jurisdiction of the Lords Foresters when not taken in the fact. He also presented a charter granted by Earl Randal, by which he was exempted from all *puture*, with the exception of lodging and maintaining six foresters, in his regular rotation; and another charter, by which he was

exempted from all suit and service to the court of the hundred of Wilaveston, then so named for the last time. With reference to the conveyance of passengers from Birkenhead to Liverpool, the pleadings state that "William Braas, who sues for our lord the Earl, prays that the Prior may shew and declare to the Court, what, and what kind of, profits he claims by virtue of the aforesaid Ferry: and the Prior says, that he claims for a man and horse, laden or not laden, two pence, and for a man on foot one farthing; and on the market day at Liverpool, to wit, on Saturday, for a man, a half-penny, and for a man and his baggage on market day, one penny." To which Braas replies, the tolls or profits were excessive and exorbitant; and a writ of inquiry was issued. Upon the majority of claims set forth by the Prior, a decision was given in his favour, not only by the Court of the Earl, but by that of the Judges of the Foresters, to whom some of the demands were referred. Yet as no final judgment or verdict was pronounced relative to the toll or charge for ferry, it is probable this was one of those factitious issues formerly so frequently adopted by religious houses, with a view to obtain judgment on points that might be disputed by others.

The privilege of electing their own prior was almost invariably enjoyed by the monks, to whom it was granted by Hamon, several years after the foundation of the convent. The description given by Leland three centuries since, of "Birket, late a priory for sixteen monks, as a cell to Chester," has given rise to much discussion,\* on the fact of Birkenhead having been an independent establishment. Bishop Tanner, in his *Notitia*, justly observes, "the distinct value of its possessions, both in the Lincoln Taxation and in the Valor Ecclesiasticus, makes me doubt whether it was ever a cell to Chester;" but the following copy of the grant to the monks to elect their own prior, clearly shews that Birkenhead was entirely free from all connexion with Chester, and in fact independent, notwithstanding in a recovery, *temp.* Edward III., the advowson occurs as being held by the barons of Dunham.

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\* It is, in fact, contradicted by the Deed of Endowment of the bishopric of Chester, out of the revenues of the abbeys of Chester and Vale Royal, the benedictine nunnery at Chester, and the priory of Birkenhead; in which deed, the latter is noticed as an independent foundation, in the same manner as the other establishments are named. Birkenhead had an estate almost within the walls of the city of Chester, and had the priory been amenable to the abbey of St. Werburgh, the mayor of Chester would have proceeded against the abbot in certain law proceedings, instead of citing, as he did, the prior. The editors of Dugdale's *Monasticon* also state they were unable to find the slightest fact that could tend to confirm Leland's assertion as to the connexion between the two monasteries, yet the Lysons have adopted it in their *Magna Britannia*.



"Omnibus Sanctæ *matris*\* ecclesia filiis præcipue hæridibus, et amicis, et omnibus hominibus, suis, clericis et laicis, tam præsentibus quam futuris; HAMO DE MASSIE salutem. Notum sit vobis me tales libertates monachis de ~~Birkenhead~~ concessisse, et hac præsentī carta mea confirmasse, scilicet de electione Prioris, ut cum prior illius loci obierit, alter ei in regimine, de ipsa congregatione succedat, et ille Prior, constituatur quem omnis congregatio Benedicti canonice elegerit. Hanc dignitatem et potestatem eligendi Prioris, supradictis monachis, pro pace et quiete eorum in perpetuum largitus sum, non solum de me, sed de hæredibus meis, secundum quod Papa ALEXANDER eis concessit et privilegii sui auctoritate confirmavit. Test."

The estates of the convent must have produced in the aggregate a sum far exceeding that which was required for the support of the prior and the sixteen monks, to which number the brotherhood was limited, had not their servitors been very numerous; and this, from the extent of the ruin it appears most probable they were. The Prior was, undoubtedly, a personage of the highest importance in Wirral. He sat in the parliament of the Earl, and enjoyed all the dignities and privileges of the other palatinate barons, seldom riding out without being attended by his chamberlain, marshal, and other officers of the household. The seneschalship of the convent was deemed a prize worthy the emulation of the most knightly houses of the county.

The demesne of the ancient Priory of Birkenhead was on a peninsular rock of red sand stone, surrounded on three sides by the river Mersey, and the fourth gradually receding westward towards Claughton, where the grange was situated. The immediate precincts of the convent were surrounded by a wall, of which there are now no remains. The ruins of the building exhibit a variation from the order of the majority of monastic houses. The sharp sea breezes which prevail on these coasts two thirds of the year, seem to have induced the founder to place the church in a more sheltered situation than it would have occupied in the ordinary arrangement of a convent. It was there-

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\* In some copies "*Maria*" appears instead of "*matris*." The following translation is in some of the older editions of the *Monasticon*:—

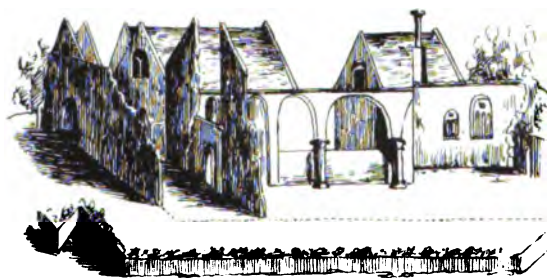
"To all the children of the Holy Church, chiefly to my heirs and friends, and all my tenants, clerks and laymen, as well to the present as to the future, Hamon de Massie sends greeting: Be it known to you, that I have granted liberties to the Monks of Birkenhead, and have confirmed to them with this my present charter; to wit, of the election of the Prior, that when the Prior of that place should die another brother of that priory may succeed to him, whom all the benediction of that priory shall choose. This pre-eminence and power of electing their Prior, I have for ever granted unto the aforesaid Monks for their quiet and assurance, for me and my heirs, according to Pope Alexander's bull and privilege confirmed unto them. Witness," &c.—Pope Alexander the Third succeeded Adrian the Sixth, in 1159, and died 1181.



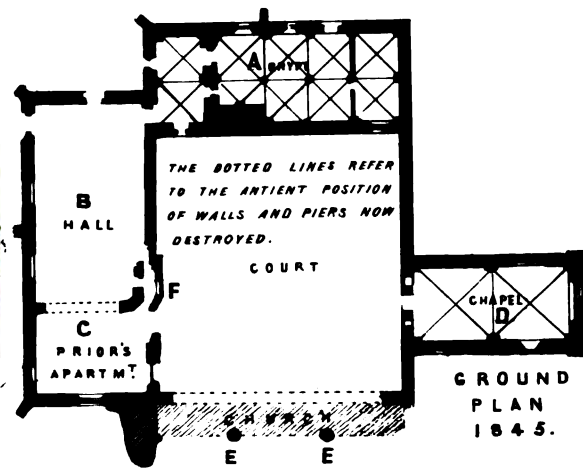
# BIRKENHEAD PRIORY.



*Interior of the Refectory*



BIRDS EYE VIEW BEFORE 1650.  
FROM KING'S VALE ROYAL.



fore placed on the south side of the pile of buildings, protected from the prevailing winds by the higher ranges which formed the north and west sides.\* The north side of the quadrangle was occupied by a building of two stories, marked A on the opposite diagram: the upper story was the dormitory, it is now a flower garden; the lower apartment, a crypt, is vaulted with stone arches, sprung from corbells in the walls, and from a row of octagonal piers. The hall, B, and the priors apartment, C, occupied the west side of the court, and extend about twenty-seven yards, the hall being twenty yards by ten; this was lighted by two elegant pointed windows on the west side, in the style of the fourteenth century. Four doors opened to the hall; one at the north end, and another on the west side, formed the approaches from without; the others opened to the offices and a small passage, F, communicated with the quadrangle and with the abbot's apartments. The passage, which is now partially blocked up, is supposed by Grose, to have been used for a confessional. The abbot's apartments, which were enriched specimens of the Decorated English style, were of two stories; the fire-places yet remain. A small spiral staircase in the angle of the building led to the priory church, which formed the south side of the quadrangle. Of this building, the west end of the north aisle may yet be traced, from which and from a very ancient drawing, it appears to have been lighted by narrow lancet shaped windows, of which there are now no remains. The arches are destroyed, but the places they occupied (marked E) are indicated by fainter shading on the plan, and a part of one of the shafts from which the arches sprung is yet attached to the fragment of the walls. The eastern, and last remaining side, consisted chiefly of a simple stone wall, from which projects, at right angles, a Norman structure, which being altogether at variance with the rules of conventual establishments, it is difficult to assign to any other purpose than that of a chapter house. This building, marked D, is sixteen yards long by eight broad, and of two stories. The lower, vaulted with stone, is by far the most ancient part of the Priory. It has a remarkably fine Norman stone-groined roof, with plain ribs. The arches of the vaulting are semicircular,

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\* The diagram of the ground plan, and a part of the description, is derived from Mr. Ormerod, who had personal opportunities of examining the ruins before the erection of the present Church and adjacent houses. His measurements have been examined, and some material errors in the architectural description rectified by Mr. Lewis Hornblower, of Birkenhead, Architect. The smaller sketch of the ruins, as they appeared about the year 1620, is copied from an engraving by King in his *Vale Royal*. The larger one is from a drawing by John P. Halton of Liverpool, Esq., in 1820. Some remarks by the late Mr. Rickman, who designed the present church, are embodied in the above description of the ancient priory.

and a huge horse shoe stretches in the centre from side to side; the stones of which it is formed, plain, square, and massive, rest on solid piers, with early Norman capitals. In the walls are the grooves for the screen, by which it was once divided. The western division, or anti-room, communicated with the church through an archway, now filled up, and with the quadrangle by a doorway, yet remaining, between the two windows. The inner, or chapter room is lighted by three windows, two in the style of the fifteenth century, but the third is coeval with the rest of this part of the monastery, being short, narrow, round headed, and in every respect strictly indicative of its Norman origin. After the dissolution this building was used as a private chapel, there being no place of worship nearer than the parish churches of Bidston, Bromborough, and Wallasey. Since the erection of the adjacent church, it has been used as a Sunday school-house, and occasionally for religious or charitable meetings.

The ruins have invariably commanded the admiration of all lovers of ancient architecture, and it is greatly to be desired that measures may be adopted to prevent their falling into utter and oblivious decay. They are the only remains in this neighbourhood of any importance, nor are there any of equal antiquity, on the opposite coast of Lancashire; their character is attested by every writer on the subject. The mouldings at the principal entrance of the Refectory "being singularly varied and extremely beautiful specimens of the Decorated style," have been adopted as a study by Rickman, and other most talented authors on Ecclesiastical Architecture.

For nearly two centuries nothing is known of the convent or its superiors, except what may be gathered from the inquisitions taken at the death of several of the priors; but even the roll of these is defective, and there is no register or consecutive record which can supply the names of its once lordly rulers.

The following list, though it is deficient in several names and dates, will be found the most complete that has yet appeared.

- Oliver: witness to a deed *temp.* John, died 1328.—Leycester, 241.
- 1328, *Robert Millenton*.—Ormerod, i. 397.
- 1338, Robert de Betchinton.
- 1339, ——— a monk elected in room of Betchinton.—See Lichfield Registers.
- *Hugh de Aston*, second son of Sir Richard Aston, *temp.* Edwards II. and III.—Leycester, 211, and Burke's Ext. and Dormt. Baronetage.

- 1379, Roger: witness to a stipulation on the part of the prior of Warrington to found a chauntry for Sir Thos. Dutton, and his descendants, 3 Rich. II. Eleven years afterwards, he was bondsman for £20, due to Nicholas de Audley of Hely.—See Harl. MSS. 2038, 18, and Leycester, 253.
- 1428, Robert: who did service at Dunham, 6 Henry VI.—Williamson's Evidences.
- 1455, Thomas Bovere, elected in 1455.—See Lichfield Registers.
- 1459, Hugh Boner, occurs 37 Henry VI.—Harl. MSS. 2158.
- 1460, Thomas Rainford: \* confirmed, 1460.—Lichfield Register.
- 1495, Nicholas: a monk elected this year.—Ibid.
- *John Sharp*: expelled at the dissolution.

The three whose names are inserted in italics, do not appear in other lists, although they are mentioned in Mr. Ormerod's work under other townships.

Millenton is interred in Bowdon church, where a monumental slab contains the arms of Millington of Millington, with an ecclesiastic kneeling, and holding in the left hand a cup; at the base is inscribed, *Orate p' bono statu Robert Middleton, a'no D'ni MCCCCXXVIII.*

In the same Church is a stained glass window of great beauty, with an inscription: "Orate pro bono statu Johannis Sharpe, priore de Birkenhead, qui istam fenestram fieri fecit, A'no D'ni MCCCCXXX." Among other ornaments in the window, are the ancient Arms of the Priory, which are those of the founder,—quarterly gules and or, in the first quarter a lion passant argent, surmounted with a croisier in pale head turned sinisterways, argent.†

\* In the year 1818 an ancient grave-stone, with the subjoined inscription around the margin, was dug up within the ruins. Three skeletons, in a very perfect state, were found buried underneath the stone; the teeth in particular were in a high state of preservation. The stone is now inserted in the wall, on the north side of the entrance to the chapel or school. It resembles red granite, and has been much dilapidated by time. The characters of the inscription are of the sort usually denominated church text, but the letters and words included in brackets are effaced.

*Hic jacet Thomas Raynesford, quo[onb] am bon' h'car h'at' [p]o[rat'] qui obit s. [vte] m'at, anno Domini  
M.C.C.C.C.]XXXIII. cu' anime p'p'iet. R.*

Which may be translated "Here lieth Thomas Raynesford, formerly the good Vicar of this house, who died the 20th of May, in the year of our Lord 1473: on whose soul may God have mercy." Having been inducted into the priory in 1460, he held it only thirteen years.

† These arms, it is presumed, were intended to have been adopted by the Commissioners of Birkenhead, but for some inexplicable reason, they have altered the tinctures, on their police appointments, by substituting purple for gules; thus manufacturing a Coat unknown in the Heraldry of the County.

For several years after the dissolution, Birkenhead and its dependant properties remained in possession of the crown. Henry, in 1545, conveyed that portion of estate of the priory which was situated in Cheshire to Ralph Worsley, the third son of William Worsley of Worsley, in Lancashire, whose numerous offices, and death are recorded on a monument in the church of St. Mary at Chester.\*

The grant was made subject to an annual payment, which has been alienated by the Crown, and is now payable to the Rev. Mr. Poyntz: the following is an abstract:—

“ The King doth give and grant to the aforesaid Ralph Worsley, all the house and site of the late priory of Birkenhead, and all the church, belfry, and church yard of the same, and also all the house, edifices, mills, barns, stables, within or without or near or nigh to the site (*sept ambet*) circuit and precinct of the same. AND that messuage and tenement, with the appurtenances, now in possession of Robert Molyneux, and one dove-house, one mill, and all the fish yards, and two acres of meadow, and seventy-eight acres of arable land, and one parcel of land where flax used to grow, and all the ferry, and the ferry-house, and the Boat called the *Feribot*, and the profit of the same, and all their appurtenances, situated and being in Byrkenhedde and Bideston and Kirkeby Walley, otherwise Wallasey, in the county of Chester, to the late prior belonging, and being in the proper hands, culture, and occupation, of the priory of the same. AND all those the lordships or manors of Claughton and Woolton, with their rights, &c., late being parcel of the possessions of the said prior. AND all the messuages, lands, tenements, &c. situated in Claughton, Wolton, Bydeston, and Kirkbye in Walley, otherwise Kirkby Wallasey, and certain yearly rents, amounting together to 26s. 8d. of the manor of Walton. AND certain yearly rents and services in Tranmere: And all the messuages, &c. in Tranmere held by Robert Holme, and the same in Wallasey held by John Hill. AND also the wood and lands called the Hagge Coppice, containing, by estimation, eighty-seven acres in Bidston and Kirkby aforesaid: And also all and singular the messuages, granges, mills, tofts, cottages, &c. fisheries, passages, &c. with the appurtenances in the townships, parishes, or

\* “Hic subtus humatur corpus Radulphi Worsley, armig. qui fuit filius tertius Gulielmi Worsley, de Worsley Meyne in Comitatu Lancastrie, arm. ac quondam serviens, scilicet, pagettus garderobae robarum, ac unus dapiferorum cameræ invictiss. principis Hénrici Octavi, Dei gratia Angliæ, Franc. et Hiber. nuper regis. Cui idem rex ob bonam et fideli servitum circum regiam suam personam impensum, ex regia sua magnificentia ad terminum vitæ donaverat officia satellitis coronæ, custodiam leonum, leonarum et leopardorum intra Turrim Londinensem; portatoris magnæ garderobæ, contrarotulator in Com. Cest. et Flint, clerici coronæ Lanc. et sceator. Com. Palat. Lancast. et alisquam remunerationes.”

hamlets, of Byrkenhedde, Claughton, Wolton, Tranmere, Bydeston, and Kirkbye Walley, to the said manors or lordships belonging. And all other the lands in the towns, fields, hamlets, or parishes aforesaid, to the said late priory belonging and appertaining, as fully, freely, and entirely, as the last prior of the said late priory, before the dissolution of the same, had held or enjoyed."

The Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the Revenues of the Monasteries, made immediately previously to the dissolution, is now in the *First Fruits Office*: the following is a translation of that which appears under the head of

**MONASTERIUM, sive PRIORAT' de BIRKENHEAD.**

"John Sharpe being Prior then, Deanery of Wirrehall in the Diocese aforesaid, in the jurisdiction of the Archdeaconry of Chester, Deanery of Wirrehall assigned in the partition or division to the Commissioners, William Stanley, knt., John Birkened, and Otwell Wolseley, auditors. VALUE IN TEMPORALITIES, viz. :

In the County of Chester, in rents and other profits				
anciently accruing as appears by the scrutiny and				
examination of the said Commissioners, to wit,				
Grange, or Ecclesiastical Lands called Birket				
Grange, together with the Water Mill and the				
Ferry Boat ( <i>Molendino aquatico et le Feribot</i> )				
	£9	0	0	
Lands in Moreton	£3 4s 5½d,	Claughton	£5 0s 4d	8 4 9½
Tranmere	17s,	Haselwell	3s 4d,	Brynstone 8d..... 1 1 0
Overbebynton	4d,	Salghan	11s,	Upton 3s ..... 0 14 4
Davenham	.....			0 4 0 £19 4 1½

In the County of Lancaster, To the same monastery various rents belong:—

In Weryngton 3d, Newsam 8s 3d, Lyrpole 4s 2d, Melling 2s 6d 0 15 2

VALUE IN SPIRITUALITIES:—

Bowdon .....	£45	7	6	
Mediety of Wallasey Rectory .....	14	3	8½	
Bidston .....	10	19	8	
Backford .....	12	6	8	
				82 17 6½

Gross amount, (as stated by Dugdale)..... £102 16 10



From which must be deducted CHARGES :

To Ralph Pool the Seneschal, per year .....	£2	0	0
The several Bailiffs or managers of the estates in Moreton, Bowdon, Backford, Wallasey, Claugh- ton, and Lancashire .....	6	13	4
Ecclesiastical pensions and payments.....	3	10	6
		12	3
		10	

Total nett Revenue (as quoted by Speed).....£90 13 0

The following return from the Office of the Court of Augmentation is curious, as shewing not only the exact value of each part of the property, but the amount to which it had increased under the administration of the King's bailiffs. It contains the return of the ministers' profits, and other valuations, on the oaths of the respective tenants, *temp.* 35 and 36 Henry VIII.,—immediately before the grant to Worsley :—

### Birkenedensis.

“ The yerly valewe of the hole Landes and Possessions, as well Sp'uall as Temp'all, of the late monast'y of Byrkenhed, in the said countie of Chester.

#### Comit. Gestræ.

#### TEMP'AL.

“ The demeanys of the late pryorye ly'ng yn the p'sshe of Bydston ar worth by yere, £14 14s. 3d.\*—Rentes and ffermes in the hamelett of Morton, £7 6s. 8d.; Claughton, wt the mano' of Bolton, in the p'sshe of Bydeston, £8 3s.; the hamelett of Kirk-bye in Waley, in the p'sshe of Walazey, £5 13s. 8d., hamelett of Thranmolle, in the p'sshe of Bevyngton, 18s.; Overbevyngton in the said p'isshe, 4d.; in the p'isshe of Barkforde, £1 6s. 8d.; in the hamelett of Saugh'm in the p'isshe of Bydestone, 11s.; and in Bydeston p'isshe, 13s. 4d. : In p'sshes of Estewall and Upton, 6s. 4d.; in the p'isshe of Seynt Oswald in Chester, 4s. 6d.; Secome, in the p'sshe of Wallezey, 4d.;

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\* They are separately enumerated the house, gardens, and appurtenances, of the Priory, together with one dovecote, 40s.; the water mill, 20s.; the fish yards, 6s. 8d.; two acres of meadow land, 6s. 8d.; seventy-eight acres of arable land, £6 4s.; one parcel of land where flax used to grow, 3d.; the tenement held by Molyneux, 9s.; the profit of the ferry-house, £4 6s. 8d; and other small items,—£14 14s. 3d.

Brynston in the p'isshe of Brombrorough, 8d.; Mellynge and Lestewytche, in the p'sshe of Danam, 6s. 6d.; ar worth by yere, £25 11s.—Makyng a Total, £40 5 3

COMIT. LANCASTR.

"Rentes and ffermes in the p'isshe of Weryngton and Newsham, 15s. 3d.; and the hamlett of Lyverpole, in the p'ishe of Walton, 18s. 4d.; \* ar worth by yere, £1 13s. 7.—Making in Temp'ualties, £41 18 10

Comit. Gestræ.

SP'UAL'TEIS.

"The p'sonage of Wallezey wt the glebe landis is worthe by yere, £12. The p'sonage of Barkeforde, wt a berne and a p'cell of lande called Rykstede, is worth by yere, £12 13s. 4d. The p'rsonage of Bydeston is worth by yere, £13 6s. 8. The p'rsonage of Bawden wt the glebe landes is worth by yere, £50	}	88	0	0
Making in all, £129			18	10

"Whereof in ~~Repris.~~ that is to say,

TEMPALTEIS. FEES.

"To Randall Arrowsmythe, baillye there, £3. To Rauf Pole, and his heys stewardis there, £2. for the excysynge of the'r offices by yere,

SP'UAL'TEIS. PENC'ONS.

"Of oon pryste syngynge at Walezay, £2 6s. 8d.; and of another pryeste syngynge at Bydeston £6 13s. 4d. the yere,	}	14	5	5
"To the archedeken of Chestre for Walezey, 5s. 3d.; and for oyle and creme to the same church, 2d. by yere; 5s 5d.				

"And so remayneth clerelye by yere, £115 13 5"

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\* In the valuable and interesting MSS of Sir Edward More now in the possession of his descendant Thomas Moore of Rock Park, Esq., the following description occurs of a part of this property:—"Jonathan Hunter's hoose, Watter Street, This hoose to ye upper Rome of the hoose; this very hoose being formerly the Granery belonging to ye priory of Birket in Worrell, where such corne as they left unsould on ye Market days was cared up those back stares of Stone into an uper rome, and there lay till next market day. This hoose, called ye Grannery to Birket Priory, was sould after ye dissolution of Abies, by yt very name." (p. 49.)

It is most probable that the priory was immediately stripped of everything that was portable or of value, but nothing of certainty is known either of the edifice, or the expelled monks. Leland, who visited the hundred within five years after the dissolution, merely says, "hard on Wyrall shore is Birket, late a priory, without any village by it." An entry in the accounts of the Corporation of Liverpool, leads to the opinion that some of the monks had adopted secular occupations: "1541, paid ii shillings to a monke of Birket, for byndynge a boke."

Worsley died in 1573, leaving three daughters, the eldest of whom, Alice, married Thomas Powell, of Horsley in the county of Denbigh, Esq.; and upon the death of her other sisters, she succeeded to the Birkenhead property of her father. Her grandson, Thomas Powell, was created a baronet, and served the office of High Sheriff of Cheshire, 16 Charles I., in the County Rolls for which year, he is described as "Sir Thomas Powell, of Birkett Abbey, Bart." He married Katherine, daughter of Sir John Egerton of Oulton, Bart., and was succeeded by his grandson the second baronet. He married twice, and had by his second wife two daughters. "He was living in 1694, soon after which he appears to have died, when the baronetcy, it is presumed, became extinct."—BURKE'S *Ext. and Drmt. Baronetage*.

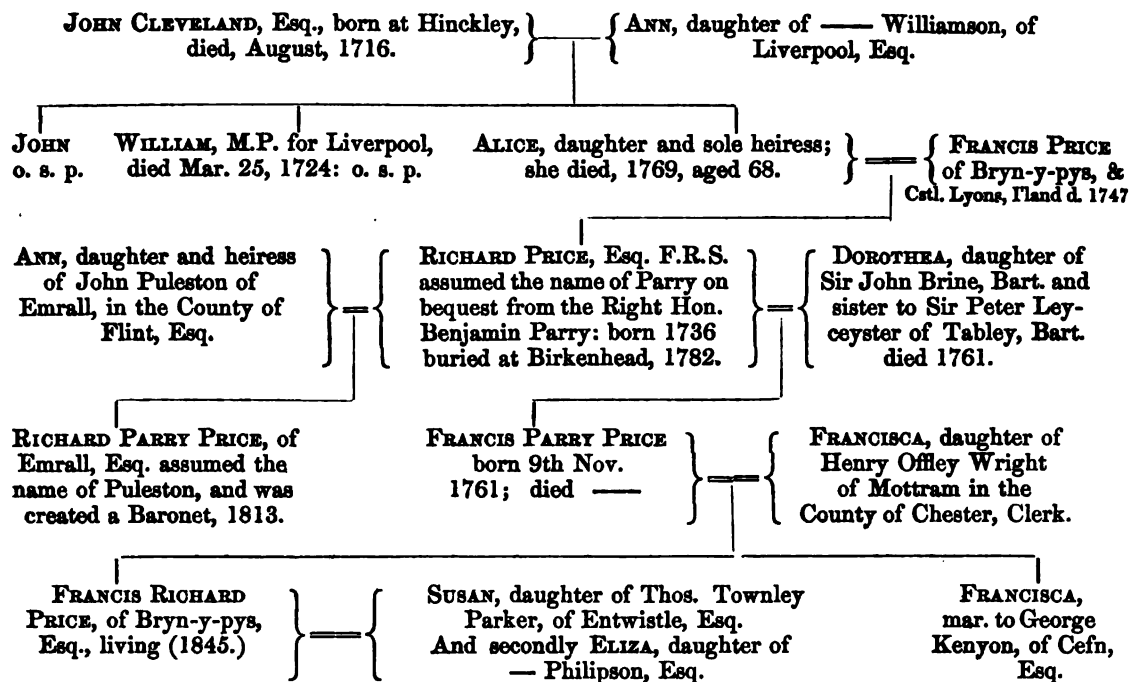
The executors of Samuel Powell of Horsley, in whom the property of the Baronet had become vested, sold that portion which had belonged to the priory, and which is described as "an estate in Cheshire called the manor of Birkenhead, *alias* Birkett and Claughton-cum-Grange, with all the demesne lands, tenements, &c. to them belonging, together with divers lands, messuages, &c. in Birkenhead or Birkett, Wallasey, Tranmere, and Claughton to John Cleveland of Liverpool, Esq.\*

Three years after he had made the purchase, Mr. Cleveland died, leaving two sons and one daughter, Alice, married to Francis Price of Bryn-y-pys, in the county of Flint, Esq., to whose great-grandson Francis Richard Price of the same place, Esq.

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\* Mr. Cleveland was a native of Hinckley, Leicestershire, and nephew of Cleveland the poet. He resided at Cleveland Place, "in the parish and near the docke of Liverpool." Some of the trees in his *Parks*, the site of which is now used as a market, remained until the last twenty years. Mr. Cleveland was one of the most eminent merchants of his day. He was M. P. for Liverpool in 1710-13, and Mayor of the borough in 1703. He was buried in the parochial chapel of St. Nicholas, there, near the place where, on the south wall, a marble cenotaph is inscribed "Here lies the body of John Cleveland, Esq. formerly a Representative in Parliament for Liverpool, who died 17th August, 1716; and of William Cleveland his son, M.P. for Liverpool, who died 25th March, 1724, aged 28 years."

the manor, lordship, and estates have descended, according to the following table:—



Mr. PRICE has no surviving issue (1845.)

From the time Birkenhead and Claughton were granted to Worsley, they are seldom mentioned. Sir Thomas Powell built the old hall, of late years generally called the Priory, on the site of the ancient hotel or lodging house erected under the licenses of the Edwards. At this he occasionally resided, and during the civil war, when the passage over the Mersey was deemed of great importance, the house was fortified by the royalists. It surrendered to the parliamentary troops on the 22nd of September, 1644, and was soon afterwards partially dismantled; subsequently the hall was rebuilt, and considerable additions were made to it by Mr. Parry Price, who lived in it for some time. At length, in 1843, after having been alternately occupied as a farm house, a boarding school, a temporary chapel, a lodging house, and a private residence, it was entirely demolished and the gardens laid out for streets, some of which are already covered with upwards of one hundred shops and houses.

## HOSPITAL UNDER BIRKENHEAD.

On an extra-parochial piece of land encircled by the parish of St. Oswald, and just outside of the Northgate of the City of Chester, stood the Hospital of St. John the Baptist, founded by Randal de Blundeville, for the "sustentation of a master, three chaplains, and thirteen citizens of Chester, being poor and sillye persons." The charter of Randal was confirmed by Henry III. and by Edward I. who gave the mastership and the keeping of the hospital to the Priors of Birkenhead. The revenues of this charity have lately been the subject of legal discussion, in consequence of an ex-officio information being filed by the Attorney-General, at the instance of the Charity Commissioners, against the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the City of Chester. From the judgment of Lord Langdale, March, 1842, it appeared that in the 15th of Edward III. the Justices of the King, who was then Earl of Chester, were directed to take the lands of the hospital into their hands, and an inquisition then held found that the hospital ought to have maintained three chaplains, two to be employed daily in the church, and one to say mass before the poor persons of the hospital, in the chapel, where a lamp was to be burned every night throughout the year; that the thirteen pensioners were to be provided "with beds competently clothed, and supplied daily with a loaf of bread, a great dish of pottage, half a gallon of competent ale, and one piece of flesh or fish, as the day shall require." There were then in the hospital only one chaplain and six widows, and the corporation of Chester remonstrated with the prior for not maintaining the full number of chaplains and pensioners, when he pleaded the insufficiency of the revenue derived from the hospital lands, which, however, the inquisition returned at £27 3s. 10d. per annum. There were other charges against the Prior, who as master of the hospital was sued by the vicar of Eastham, in 1316, for seven white loaves and seven bottles of beer of equal *competency* to that which he used, or in lieu thereof half a mark. *Harl. MSS.* 2195, 104.

During the siege of Chester the chapel and hospital were destroyed, and afterwards Cromwell, with a view more effectually to further the intentions of the founder, granted their estates to the mayor and corporation of Chester to be employed in "ye sustentation and ye maintenance of all ye pore of ye spittle," and this grant was after some alienation by Charles II. confirmed to the Corporation in the 37th year of his reign. In 1703 the corporation unanimously resolved that the revenue should be applied

according to the original intent of the grantor; but a desire was soon evinced to apply the money in a different manner, and, in 1707, an order was made that the surplus revenue should be laid out as the mayor and justices should direct. Subsequently, it was gradually appropriated to other purposes until 1762, when the receipts were finally incorporated with the general revenues of the Corporation. In 1712 the rental was £34 7s. 6d. arising from leases, granted for long terms, in the name of the master, brethren, and sisters; and the expense of the maintenance of the widows was £23 11s. 8d. In 1714 the present Blue Coat Hospital was built, under the direction of the Corporation, and by the aid of subscriptions, on the hospital lands. The disbursements of the hospital, in 1843, were £115 3s. 1d., of which about £83 was applied to charitable purposes.

Upon this statement the information prayed the court to inquire into the particulars of the estates, and to declare them to belong to the charity; to require the Corporation to produce deeds, and to join, where necessary, in the transferring of such deeds to trustees to be appointed by the court, and also for an order for the appropriation of the present and future income; the Corporation contended they were entitled to the revenue, which they admitted to be about £600, and that the balance was carried to the yearly account of the city. Lord Langdale, however, granted the prayer, but no final order has yet been made, although argued at some length on the 30th July, 1846.

The following,—Bishop Tanner's account of Birkenhead,—is extracted from his *NOTITIA, tit. Cheshire*: "Birkenhead, Birkehedde, (a) Bircheved, (b) Byrkett, (c) or Birket-wood, (d) a Benedictine priory. Hamon Massey, third Baron of Dunham Massey, in the latter end of King Henry II., or in King Richard I. reign, built here a priory for sixteen Benedictine monks, which was dedicated to St. Mary and St. James, and was subordinate to the Abbey of Chester (e)."

To these several etymologies of Birkenhead others might be added, and it has been observed that instances occur where the word is spelled differently in the same deed. This, which frequently does not appear to have been caused by accident or neglect, is the source of much trouble and inconvenience in the examination of ancient records. The manor of *Woolton* or *Wolton* is mentioned in the grant of the Cheshire

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"(a) MS. Corp. Christ. Col. Cant. (b) Tax. Lincoln. (c) Leland's Itin. (d) Vale Royall."

"(e) So Leland, Itin, vol. v. page 56; but the grant of free election for a prior makes me doubt much whether this was a celle to Chester."

estates to Worsley, and, in one of the Ministers' returns it is stated to be in the parish of Bidston; there is not, however, the slightest trace of such manor; and as there is not even a single house of the name in that parish, or in any of the neighbouring townships, it probably refers to the Lancashire possessions of the priory, as in the last return "the hamlette of *Lyverpool* in the p'sshe of *Wolton*," occurs, together with *Newsam* in West Derby, which is in the parish of Walton. *Bolton* is evidently intended for Walton, in which parish Liverpool then was. It is difficult to account for the spelling in the latter document: *Bevyngton* appears for Bebington, *Bakeforde* for Backford, *Estewall* and *Essewall* for Heswall, *Thranmolle* for Tranmere, and *Lestewytche* for Leftwich in Davenham, which latter is very fairly represented by *Danam*. The errors in this instance occur in the original, but many in others are attributable to the difficulty of decyphering the writing of that period; a circumstance which has led some authors into much confusion, and particularly with regard to the initial letters. Generally speaking, a long series of ancient names of places, or of offices, is far from interesting; but if names be inserted, they may as well be correct. Yet in the list of the Vicars, between the years 1650 and 1658, of the old Collegiate Church of St. John at Chester, the Historian of the County has conferred that dignity upon an honest citizen and *dier*, of the name of Phillip Wilson, solely because the description of his trade, in the register of deaths was mistaken for *vicar*; an error the more inexcusable as the same page records that in 1658, "John Pemberton, minister of this p'she Church, died xi April," and "Phillip Wilson, *Diar*, died the xiii September."

As it was stated on page 312 that the ancient demesne of the Priory was surrounded on three sides by the Mersey, it may not be unnecessary to observe that the branch of that river called Tranmere Pool, was only filled up within the last few years. The space now occupied by the gas works and some timber yards, was previously covered with water. The bridge, or rather embankment, from the south part of Birkenhead to Tranmere, is also of comparatively recent construction; prior to its formation, the mails from Chester were brought to the Woodside Ferry by way of Holt Hill.

#### GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION.

The latitude of Birkenhead Church is, 53 degrees, 23 minutes, 28 seconds. N.

The longitude of the same is . . . 3 . . . 0 . . . 1 . . . W.

Having thus endeavoured to extract from the numerous but imperfect records which exist, a short sketch of the ancient history of Birkenhead, it remains to describe its progress from the termination of the last century to the present day. Few places, within the same short period, have risen so rapidly into importance as Birkenhead; twenty-five years have not elapsed since it contained only about one hundred persons occupying the three houses, which with the ruins of the ancient priory, the ferry-house and a few straggling cottages, were all the buildings then comprised in the township, vill, chapelry, or place,—for there is some difficulty in accurately denominating this now flourishing town,—which suddenly, under the fostering care of men, whose names will for ages be associated with its history, has been ushered into a new state of existence.

Never were works of immense public utility, grand in conception, and admirable in design, commenced with greater spirit and energy than in Birkenhead: within the last few years the whole neighbourhood has assumed a different aspect,—a town now stands where then only a few scattered houses could be seen. Upon green fields which scarcely served for pasture, stately mansions, and magnificent streets, squares, and terraces, have arisen; and where the tidal waters, even last year, flowed uninterrupted in their course, hundreds and thousands of labourers are now employed, transforming the sanded shores and weed-clad banks of the Mersey into immense docks, for the accommodation of vessels from every nation and of every clime.

The township\* contains by the admeasurement of the County 543 acres, of a quality little suited for agricultural purposes. In 1801 its inhabitants consisted of 110 persons forming 17 families, occupying 16 houses. The census of 1811 exhibited a return of only 105 persons (52 male and 53 female) comprised in 18 families, of whom four were engaged in trade; and seven in agriculture; the remaining seven were probably fishermen and boatmen. The period, however, was approaching when a material alteration was to take place in the affairs of this then almost desolate hamlet.

Soon after the demise of his father, Mr. Price who had succeeded to the entire townships of Birkenhead and Claughton, barred the entail created in 1765, by the will of his great-grandmother Mrs. Alice Price, which limited the estates to her grandson, Francis Parry Price, and the heirs of his body in tail male. And in 1817 and 1818 the late Messrs. Hetherington and Grindrod, whose attention seems

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\* Exclusive of Claughton and a small portion of Oxton, recently united to Birkenhead by Act of Parliament.



to have been attracted by the greater facility of transit likely to result from the introduction of steam-boats on the Mersey, where they first appeared in 1815, made a considerable purchase from Mr. Price, comprehending a large portion of the sea front of the township, and the lands surrounding the priory. In their agreement with Mr. Price it was stipulated that certain streets should be cut through the fields, and a new church built by that gentleman; they, on the other hand, engaging to form another landing place and to construct an hotel, on that part of the property now occupied by the Birkenhead Hotel and Ferry.

The various operations dependent on these engagements were commenced without delay, and the new ferry was opened in 1821, when steam-boats were first established, by the late Mr. George La French, between Birkenhead and Liverpool. The anticipation of the benefit expected from their introduction was soon realized. Previously, the only mode of crossing the Mersey was by boats, propelled either by the oar or by sails, and at certain states of the tide, hours were required to accomplish the short passage. A residence in Cheshire was, therefore, incompatible with any trading avocations in Liverpool; but the mighty revolution which has been effected by the powers of steam, reducing that distance to a mere ten minutes' sail, in a short time caused a current of immigration to set in upon the Cheshire shore of the river, which regularly and progressively added to its prosperity.

In the absence of all the earlier books and accounts of the township, the following copy of the earliest "Assessment" known to have been made is interesting, as it identifies the inhabitants, and the value of the several properties in 1821.\*

"Birkenhead, October 29, 1821. An assessment for the necessary relief of the Poor, and for other purposes relating to the poor for the Township of Birkenhead, for the year 1821.

Koster, for the Hall.....	£0	17	6
P. Nichols .....	2	15	6
J. Nichols, .....for the Hall Farm, £4	1	0	
Ditto.....for Davis's Land ...	0	9	6
Ivy Rock .....	0	12	0
Wm. Roberts, Woodside and Ferry .....	3	15	0
Thomas Davis, for part of Road Hall Farm .....	1	16	9
E. White, for part of the same.....	0	15	0

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\* It was accidentally found by a person who recently filled the office of Assistant-Overseer.

Wm. Moore, for ditto .....	£1	10	0			
Ditto, for late Grooms.....	0	6	0	1	16	0
Thos. Wharton .....				1	7	0
				<hr/>		
				£18	5	3

JOSEPH NICHOLS, Overseer."

By the census of this year, there appears to have been only 200 residents in Birkenhead; 86 males, and 114 females.

The next following years witnessed considerable additions to the number of inhabitants, and to the accommodations provided for them. In 1822 the new Church was opened, and several piles of houses erected. In 1823 an actual survey of Birkenhead and Claughton was made by the late Mr. William Lawton, a land-surveyor, and agent to Mr. Price, from which it appears there were in the month of July in that year, sixty-one houses or other tenements, the gross annual rental of which was £3101 4s. 6d.; and as this included all the land used for farming and other purposes, the ferry, the stone quarries, and the nominal rent of some unoccupied houses, it may be considered as the actual value of the entire township at that period.

In 1824, the late William Laird, Esq., then an eminent merchant of Liverpool, purchased a large quantity of land about the centre of the town, with the intention of erecting upon it buildings in a style of magnificence unsurpassed in this part of the kingdom. The execution of his plans was confided to Mr. Gillespie Graham, of Edinburgh, from whose designs Hamilton Square and the Streets immediately adjacent were laid out. Although this project did not for some time appear to answer, a very few houses only being built, and those not occupied, the prosperity of the township under the auspices of the same party continued to advance. Some differences that existed at this time, between the journeymen shipwrights of Liverpool and their employers, induced several of the latter to open establishments in Birkenhead, and a slip was constructed at Wallasey Pool on "Morton's" patent for hauling up vessels wanting repairs. Mr. Laird also purchased a large tract of land, on the shore of the Wallasey Pool, on a part of which he established the Boiler and Iron Ship-building Yards, that have since attained such great celebrity. In 1827, Sir J. Tobin and Mr. Laird having previously bought the remaining part of the land on the shore of the pool, had it surveyed by Messrs. Nimmo, Telford, and Robert Stephenson, who reported so favourably of its cap-

abilities for the construction of a Dock and floating harbour, in connection with a Ship Canal \* to the Dee, that a plan for a joint-stock company was brought forward and an application made for its incorporation. But the Corporation of Liverpool having purchased the property in 1828, the scheme was abandoned.

The census of 1831 exhibited a return of 2569 inhabitants: the far greater part engaged in trading pursuits; since that period every succeeding year has added to the commercial importance of Birkenhead and the vicinity.

The number of persons who settled in Birkenhead continuing to increase, and much inconvenience being experienced from the want of a Public Market in the township, an application to parliament was proposed for an act to supply the deficiency, and to establish a Police. The suggestion was, however, violently opposed, and it was with much difficulty its promoters were enabled to carry the measure, which received the Royal Assent, on the 10th June, 1833. By this act the management of the affairs of the township was entrusted to Commissioners, consisting of the Mayor, two Bailiffs, and four Aldermen, of Liverpool, with sixty other persons, inhabitants of Birkenhead, who were named in the act. They were empowered to raise eight thousand pounds on the credit of their rates and tolls, with which to erect a market, to pave, light, and cleanse the public streets, and to maintain a separate police, for the limits to which their power extended; and the township, being charged with the maintenance of its own roads, was relieved from any contribution to the highway, or turnpike rates.

The Commissioners immediately proceeded to carry the provisions of their act into effect; a police force was appointed, the sewerage of the town commenced, and in the following year, the market-house and other public offices, which the increasing number of inhabitants had rendered requisite, were completed. Large groups of houses were now building, and the greatest activity exhibited in this and the adjoining townships. To the southward, joining to Birkenhead, in Tranmere, a pier, graving dock, and shipwright's yard, were constructed and in full operation; on the northern side of Wallasey Pool, in Poulton, various chemical works were erected; while in Birkenhead several large ships were building, and to the extensive boiler-works, which had for several years been carried on by the late Mr. Laird, an important addition was made by the

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\* The estimated cost of constructing the works, was £1,218,217; for salaries, law expenses, and other contingencies £182,731, making a total of £1,400,948.

establishment of the Iron Ship-building Yards, from which, in this year (1834) the *John Randolph*, the first iron vessel for America, was dispatched.

The years 1835 and 1836 are fertile in important events connected with the welfare of Birkenhead. The various works then in progress, in different parts of the township, requiring an additional number of persons, greatly increased the intercourse with Liverpool; but the Woodside Ferry was conducted in a manner so irregular and unsatisfactory that several of the principal inhabitants were induced to form a Joint Stock Company, with a view to its future management. Having made arrangements with the lessee of the Ferry, and purchased his boats, the "Woodside Ferry Company,"\* in August, 1835, undertook to conduct the Ferry on their own account, and commenced operations with great vigour. The landing places were improved, larger and better packets were purchased, and the greatest regularity in their departure maintained. The result of these alterations was soon visible in the greatly increased number of passengers, and the superiority of the accommodations afforded them.

Hitherto the greater portion of the houses in Birkenhead, and particularly those in the southern, the most densely populated part, had been erected without any regard to regularity of plan or elevation, in narrow and confined streets. In the later purchases, it is true, restrictions had been inserted for the construction of wider and more regular streets; but little had been done to promote that uniformity of design which it had been the original intention of Mr. Laird to attain. In 1836 a considerable area was purchased in the middle of the township, of which about fifteen acres were laid out as a park; and bounded with wide streets, which crossed at right angles. The inclosure—Parkfield—was soon studded with detached villas, giving a character and appearance to the town that it had not previously enjoyed.

The accounts of the Woodside Ferry Company, at the termination of their first year exhibited such flattering results, that a few of its shareholders, with some others who had not been so fortunate as to obtain shares, joined by a powerful party from Liverpool, determined to purchase the Ivy Rock estate, on which to construct another Ferry, to compete with the old establishment at Woodside, and the Monks' Ferry

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\* The establishment of this Company may be considered as a most interesting epoch in the history of Birkenhead. It brought to the same Board of Direction nearly all those, from whom the various plans for the Railroads, Parks, Docks, and other public works, which will be separately referred to hereafter, have since emanated.

Company was accordingly announced in 1836. A few months previously to this, another Company had been formed for the purpose of constructing a Railway between Chester and Birkenhead, a measure that had been rejected in parliament some years before, but which was sanctioned by the legislature in 1837. The greatest activity continued to prevail in the affairs of the township, in which a large Wesleyan Chapel, a Roman Catholic Chapel, a Church dedicated to the Holy Trinity, an Independent Chapel, with other edifices devoted to religious and educational purposes, were successively commenced; and it was soon found that the increasing exigencies of the town required further legislative powers for its government. These were granted by an act, which obtained the Royal Assent 11th June, 1838, authorizing an additional loan of £8000, and making a material alteration in the constitution of the Commissioners, who were in the first instance irresponsible and elected for life, excepting in case of removal or disqualification. Their number was reduced to twenty-four; three to be elected by the Town Council of Liverpool, and the remaining twenty-one by the resident ratepayers; their qualification was fixed at the actual occupation of premises rated to the poor at thirty-five pounds per annum, or the possession of property in the township of the value of fifteen hundred pounds.

In the spring of 1838, the Monks' Ferry Company commenced running steam-boats between Liverpool and their new station, a proceeding that met with great opposition from the Woodside Ferry Company, who reduced the charge for crossing the river to two-pence, which has since been the settled rate at the three ferries in Birkenhead. The Monks' Ferry Company, with a view to bringing the subject to a legal termination, had run for a month in the previous autumn, for which an action was brought against them by the Woodside Company, as the lessees under Mr. Price, and after a trial of three days at Chester, a verdict was returned on the 10th August, that "the plaintiffs had an ancient right of Ferry which the defendants had infringed."

The Railway cuttings commenced in May, 1838. During this year the profits of the Woodside Ferry, partly owing to the reduction of the rates, were very limited, and the great anxiety of a majority of its shareholders to dispose of the concern, led to its being sold to the Directors of the Railway on the 7th September, 1838.

The Monks' Ferry Company having obtained a rule for a new trial in the Ferry case, it was again brought forward at Chester, in the autumn assizes of 1839, when the former verdict was confirmed.

A considerable addition was made in this year, to the number of houses in the township; another side of Hamilton Square was completed, the Independent Chapel was opened, and the foundation of an elegant Scotch Kirk was laid. The Commissioners under the authority of their second act announced a Cattle and Cheese Fair, the first ever held here, for the 8th October, 1839. In the following month the *Nemesis*, iron steam frigate, so frequently mentioned in the Chinese war, was launched from the building yard of Mr. Laird, where the greatest activity prevailed, the three vessels for the last Niger Expedition and others being then in progress.

In 1840 the Scotch Kirk was opened. The Monks' Ferry Company suspended the further running of their boats, and sold their dock, pier, and entire establishment, excepting the packets, to the Chester and Birkenhead Railway Company, whose line was opened in the month of September, 1840. Having thus become possessed of both Ferries, the Railroad Company intimated their intention to discontinue taking annual contracts. This announcement excited considerable alarm, for as the annual payment was so much less than the daily payments would have amounted to, the alteration would have had a serious effect on the rents of the township; after a tedious negociation, however, the interest of the Railway Company in the Woodside Ferry was, in October, 1841, sold to Mr. William Jackson, who immediately offered his contract to the Commissioners of Birkenhead, by whom it was purchased.

The Census which was made in 1841, gave a return of 8223 inhabitants in Birkenhead, of whom 3787 were males, and 4436 females; of the males, 2009 were over twenty years, and 1778 were under that age; the majority of females were also upwards of twenty, the numbers being respectively 2473 and 1963. Of the residents in the town, 2752 were returned as having been born in the county of Chester, and 5471 in other parts of the kingdom, including, however, a very few aliens. There were at the date of the census being taken, 1270 inhabited and 91 uninhabited houses in Birkenhead, and 119 building. In Cloughton, at the same date, there were 240 inhabitants, of whom 175 were born in Cheshire, and 65 in other parts; they occupied the forty houses the township then contained. These returns do not by any means accord with the present population, which, at the least, now amounts to about thirty thousand, of whom a classification will hereafter be attempted.

In this year, 1841, two Acts of Parliament were obtained; the one to complete Trinity Church, which was opened in November, and the other to supply the town and adjacent townships with Gas and Water.

By the provisions of their first act, the Commissioners were empowered to manufacture, or to contract for the supply of Gas. They declined the former, and there was no person willing to encounter the risk of furnishing a town so widely scattered as Birkenhead. At length, after a lapse of seven years, John and William Jackson Esqrs. undertook the requisite construction of the works, and in January, 1841, the town was lighted with Gas. This is the first time there has been occasion to mention the names of these gentlemen, but here it would be improper not especially to refer to the foresight, energy, and ceaseless assiduity, with which they have devoted themselves to the welfare of the town. Even when extensively engaged in mercantile pursuits in Liverpool, they found time to watch the rising interests of Birkenhead; and they subsequently have been the unwearied supporters of every measure calculated to advance the prosperity of the town, which is mainly indebted to them for most of the institutions by which it is adorned.

In the course of the following year, 1842, an announcement was made of the intention of the Commissioners to purchase land for the construction of a public Park and a Cemetery, in the immediate vicinity of the town. This proposal, upon being submitted to the inhabitants at a public meeting, appeared to receive general approbation; and purchases were accordingly made of a much greater quantity of land than was requisite for the Park, in the expectation of considerable profit arising from its re-sale. Notices were given of an application to Parliament for "an Act for extending the powers of the Commissioners of Birkenhead, and for including the township of Claughton-cum-Grange, and part of the township of Oxton, within their jurisdiction." In April, 1843, this Act received the Royal Assent; it contains 125 clauses, giving powers to purchase lands for improvement of the town, and the formation of a Park; for the appropriation of land for Baths; for the appointment of a Health Committee, who are empowered to make various sanitary restrictions; for the inspection of weights and measures, for the regulation of public houses, width of streets, building of houses, prevention of dwellings in cellars, the licensing of hackney coaches, porters, &c., together with many other enactments relative to the sewers, drainage of highways; and for the purpose of carrying this and previous Acts into effect, power was granted to

borrow a sum of money not exceeding three hundred thousand pounds. The rules of Parliament not permitting a Cemetery to be included in such a bill, a separate Act was obtained "for establishing a Cemetery in Birkenhead and Claughton-cum-Grange, or one of them." It will be seen, in another article, how zealously the Commissioners exerted themselves to carry into effect the great object of these bills; in doing which, they were greatly facilitated by the confidence reposed in them by the monied interest. There was not the least difficulty in borrowing the requisite funds, nor was there any occasion to levy an increased tax on the inhabitants.

The town has since continued so rapidly to increase in importance and prosperity, that an almost bare enumeration of the various public works, since completed or in progress, must here suffice. The formation of the Park commenced immediately after the Act was obtained, and the works were prosecuted with the greatest vigour. In the course of the summer, a few parties resolved to attempt to carry out the plans originally suggested by the late Mr. Laird, but the accomplishment of which had been prevented, in 1828, by the Corporation of Liverpool then purchasing the shores of Wallasey Pool. The greater portion of these lands were bought, however, from the Town Council by Messrs. John Laird, William Jackson, and William Potter, who undertook to mature one of the most gigantic schemes of which the history of Britain bears record,—the construction of a tidal harbour and sea wall,—whereby an inclosure would be made, at Wallasey Pool, affording an amount of accommodation greater than the entire of the docks at Liverpool.

To the astonishment of all, at the usual monthly meeting of the Commissioners in November, it was announced, that not only was the land purchased, but plans had been prepared and every requisite for going to Parliament completed, by parties who were willing to accomplish this magnificent project at their own expense and risk; and who came before them solely to request that the application to parliament might be made in the name of that body, who were to be constituted Commissioners or Trustees of the intended works, towards the formation of which the township would not be taxed directly or indirectly.

A proposal so flattering was received with the greatest enthusiasm, and the requisite application was immediately made to Parliament for powers to carry these intentions into effect. A sudden advance took place in the value of land, which in many parts of the town, and particularly near the shores of the river, doubled in price. The



interest thus excited in the town was, in the spring of 1844, greatly increased by the purchase of the Chester and Birkenhead Railway by the newly formed "Chester and Holyhead Company," a contract that immediately rose the shares in the former line from £16 @ £17 to £33 @ £34 each.

The Birkenhead Dock Bill, after having been most vehemently opposed before Committees of both houses of Parliament, received the Royal Assent on the 19th July, 1844. At this period, an activity prevailed in every part of the township which it is difficult to describe. Streets were forming in all directions; large piles of houses building in various quarters, particularly about the high lands of Claughton and the neighbourhood of the Park; the Market-house and other public works were in progress; while the intercourse with Liverpool had become so great as to require two additional packets of much larger size than any previously employed. The attention of the public was naturally drawn to the proceedings of the Commissioners, at whose successive monthly meetings, fresh projects for the advancement of the town were regularly announced. Among these may be mentioned, the formation of a Company with a capital of upwards of a million, for the erection of iron warehouses on the margin of the River, and an extension of the Railway to the Warehouses and Docks. Several new lines of Railways were also projected, which, from their junction with existing lines running towards Chester, would greatly facilitate the communication between Birkenhead and almost every part of the kingdom. One of these projects, the "Birkenhead, Manchester, and Cheshire," which was intended to join the Chester and Birkenhead line, was defeated in the Committee upon Standing Orders; but the Railway department of the Board of Trade reported most favourably of the measure, which, under another title, will be revived in the Session of 1846.

Several other schemes were announced towards the close of the year; some of which may probably not be attempted for years, if ever. Such as a Tunnel under the Mersey, and a Canal across the Hundred to the shores of the Dee, opposite the Collieries near Flint; a Railway has also been advertized from the Docks to nearly the same point, and the prospectus states, that it is intended to enclose a large portion of the shore of the Dee, and to carry the rails by an embankment and bridge across that river into Wales.

The Tunnel to the Monks' Ferry was opened in October, 1844; the 23rd of which month will ever be memorable in the annals of Birkenhead as being the day, on which the first stone of the great Dock works was laid,—an event which was celebrated by a festival unparalleled in the North of England.

Toward the close of the year, Mr. Price sold the residue of his Birkenhead property, together with St. Mary's Church, and the manor of Claughton, to William Jackson, Esq., thus terminating the connection that had existed between those townships and the house of Byrn-y-pys for upwards of a century.

The prospects of Birkenhead at the commencement of 1845, were of the most flattering description. The Dock works, at which one thousand men were employed, were in active progress, and about an equal number of labourers were working at the Park. The demand for building materials, and particularly for bricks, was so great, that engagements were made with contractors from Leicestershire, Kent, and other parts, who brought down many hundred men with them. Houses were so scarce, notwithstanding an increase of 475 on the number of the preceding year, of the value of £13,000, that the Birkenhead Dock Company, despairing of any other mode of finding habitations for the labourers and others employed in the construction of their works, advertized for the building by contract of no less than 350 houses, which will be completed early in the Autumn. Nor was the increase only in the lower class of tenements; many of the principal merchants of Liverpool took up their residence in Birkenhead and Claughton; while the documents connected with the public works of the town, published in accordance with the rules of Parliament, showed how intimately the monied interest was connected with those undertakings. Money flowed in from various quarters, and certainly it would appear to be all required; for in addition to the gigantic schemes in Cheshire, the Herculaneum Docks at Liverpool, were purchased by the Birkenhead Dock Estate, under the auspices of which, and aided by a powerful provisional directory, another line of Railroad from that town, to join the Birkenhead and Manchester line, has been announced.

In Session of 1845 four acts of parliament were obtained for the erection in Birkenhead and Claughton of four churches, which are now building. The extension of the Railway to the Docks was recognized by parliament, and likewise the construction of Warehouses at its terminus, at the Dock quays. An important enactment was also obtained by which the Corporation of Liverpool were obliged to sell the

*fee-simple* of the land, which the Dock Commissioners had the previous year obtained under lease from them. The bill for constructing a dock at Tranmere, previously referred to, was withdrawn, but a small dock on the south side of Birkenhead, and a considerable inclosure of Tranmere Pool was completed in the spring.

An extensive plot of land,—the greater part of the park,—was offered for sale in June, and about one-third sold, at the average rate of eleven shillings per yard, or about seven times the price paid for the same in 1842.

In July, the New Market was opened; and also the extensive Abattoir, built by the Commissioners of Birkenhead, who have powers granted to them to limit the slaughtering of cattle in the township, to such places only as they should license.

The contract with the Chester and Holyhead Railway Company for the purchase of the Chester and Birkenhead line was annulled, but after long and tedious negotiations, other arrangements were made by the Directors of the latter, which are expected to be found as beneficial to the Company as advantageous to the community. The details are not yet (7th August) fully developed to the public, but they will be inserted under the head of Ferries and Railways,

Before a particular description of the various public works and edifices in Birkenhead is given, the following extract, from Chambers' Edinburgh Journal of the 17th May, 1845, may not be uninteresting.

“One of the facts which have most deeply impressed us lately, is the sudden rise of a new city in England. A city we are accustomed to consider as the growth of centuries, for cities have heretofore always taken centuries to build. But now, such is the hugeness of the power created by the industry and wealth of this country, there is at least one city which will undoubtedly have risen within the brief space between the boyhood and manhood of its first inhabitants. We allude to Birkenhead on the Mersey, near Liverpool. By far the greater number of our readers will have never heard of this place even by name; yet it is one of the greatest wonders of the age, and indeed one of those by which the character of our age is most strongly expressed. We visited it lately in order to ascertain how far the reports about it were true, and we now propose conveying to the public some idea of what we saw and learned on the spot.

“The Mersey at Liverpool is a river or estuary, two-thirds of a mile in breadth. The ground opposite to the great emporium of commerce was, till a recent period, altogether waste, or occupied by farms and hamlets. One of the latter, named Birkenhead, had risen in connexion with a priory of the eleventh century. Steam navigation at length facilitating the intercourse between the two sides of the river, the sloping banks opposite Liverpool had become crested by a few ranges of neat mansions for the merchants of that town, and thus things went on till two or three

years ago. A few enterprising persons then became aware of the suitability of a creek in the river at Birkenhead for commercial purposes, and proposed converting it into a set of docks supplementary to the mighty range covering six square miles in connexion with their own town. The corporation of Liverpool had bought the land surrounding Wallasey Pool, as this creek was called, for £180,000, and now they were not unwilling to transfer their purchase. It was bought, and parliament applied to, for permission to lay out £400,000 in the formation of the proposed docks. This request being obtained, the Birkenhead Docks were commenced last year, and are now in rapid progress. At the same time, a city capable of containing a hundred thousand inhabitants is rising, which our posterity will yet know as familiarly as we now do Liverpool itself, or any of the other large towns in Britain.

"Landing from one of the steamers, which cross the Mersey every half hour, we walked into this City of the Future with expectations which the reality by no means disappointed. When we had passed a mere frontier of short streets overlooking the river, we were at once launched into a mile's breadth of street building, where unfinished houses, unmade roadways, brickfields, scaffolding, heaps of mortar, loaded wains, and troops of busy workmen meet the eye in every direction. It was like the scene which Virgil describes when he introduces Æneas and his companion into Carthage, but like nothing which had ever met our eyes in real life. Where houses were occupied or shops opened, they had all a peculiarly fresh sparkling look, like furniture in an upholsterer's ware-room as compared with that in private dwellings. The very children playing or walking in the streets looked old beside them. In some streets, traceable as such by buildings posted here and there along a line, the substratum of the roadway was only in the course of being formed; in others the process had advanced as far as the superficies of macadamized trap; but hardly anywhere was a beaten and smoothed road to be seen. You entered a piece of street with a particular name, and a half an hour after, walking in quite a different part of the country—for country it still is in some measure—you fall into another piece of street bearing the same name. You wonder at first, but presently it appears they are various extremities of one street, only there is a wild wilderness of brickfields between them. You ask for the public buildings and find they are all in the masons' hands, excepting a few churches. There is to be a capital town-hall—a capital market—a capital everything. \* \* \* Near by is the grand square of Birkenhead—a subject of pride with the inhabitants, as it happens there is nothing approaching it in spaciousness or elegance in Liverpool. But probably from being spoiled by the beauties of our own fair city, we thought Hamilton Square no more than passable; nor did the interior of the houses make up in elegance or comfort, for a somewhat poor kind of architecture.

"Making a detour towards the east, we found a beautiful slope rising above the nascent town and occupied by a fine range of villas scattered throughout its space. This is Clifton Park, and it comprehends an arrangement which we have often thought might be followed with advantage in every large town in the empire. The principle is, that the place is an ornamented piece of ground, which both generally and in its parts has the usual recommendation of pleasure ground, while houses are only scattered over it, each having the command of a certain space

without interfering with the general arrangements for walks, or with the general effect from a distance. Thus each family may be said to have the advantage of neighbourhood combined with the *délices* of a fine rural situation.

"After a considerable walk, we reached a part of the environs which is calculated to make a greater impression than perhaps any other thing connected with the town. The misfortune of all ordinary large towns is, that they have to struggle with difficulties imposed by former centuries narrow streets, the nuisance of cemeteries, the want of right sewerage and of places of recreation for the inhabitants. Here Birkenhead, being a town building from the foundation in an enlightened age, has a great advantage. Its sewerage may be perfect if the managers choose; and it will be their eternal disgrace if this essential point be overlooked or inadequately attended to. They need have no lanes, no *cul-de-sacs*, no courts, none of the architectural curses of Liverpool. Finally, they have it in their power to reserve part of the ground at their command for recreation. We feel the greatest pleasure in stating that, following the improved sanitary views of the last few years, they have made it one of their first cares to establish a 'park'—meaning thereby an open piece of ornamented ground—for the future inhabitants of their city. We found it in the course of being formed under the direction of the well-known Mr. Paxton of Chatsworth; and, to judge from what we saw of it in rather unfavourable circumstances, it promises to be a fine place. Already the required undulations of the ground have been effected; vast quantities of trees and flowers have been planted; two sheets of water are formed; several lodges are built; and though the act for purchasing the ground dates only from September last, we may be said to have the first sketch of a park presented to our eyes. The whole is expected to be complete and at the service of the public next September. We were delighted with what we saw here; but the satisfaction of the eye is nothing in such a case; the point really to be rejoiced in is that the ideas of men are now so far advanced, with respect to the essentials of public health and convenience, that, in preparing a new city, a park for the use of the inhabitants should have been among the first things legislated for. To the same advancement is it to be attributed that the ground set apart for burying the future inhabitants of Birkenhead is at a spot called Flaybrick Hill, which also will be out of town. Here excavations are in progress for the construction of sepulchral vaults and catacombs, the removed stone being used—for the managers, like Mrs. Gilpin, are of a frugal mind—in the formation of the docks. The slaughter-houses are also out of town—a suite of buildings properly enclosed, and supplied with every requisite for the preservation of cleanliness and order. Birkenhead will teach many useful lessons to older towns, and this is one of them.

"We came at last to the Docks, which are formed by the simple process of sluicing the water of the Wallasey Pool, and building quays along its banks. The inner dock will be of 150 acres in extent, with 19 feet depth of water; and there will be an outer or low-water harbour of 37 acres, with quay space of 300 feet in breadth (reclaimed from the sea) on each side. A range of warehouses will front the wet docks on the side towards the town. Besides these accommodations for shipping, there will be a small dock of 3 acres, and a tidal basin of 16, with beaching

ground for coasting vessels. There will thus be provided, on the Cheshire side of the Mersey, a range of docks containing an area of 206 acres. Such a work undertaken and produced at once, may safely be pronounced without parallel in this country. Around the site of the proposed docks are already various important works. There is a large establishment for the construction of iron vessels, and at which many have been built. There is also a varnish manufactory, an iron foundry, a patent slip for repairing vessels, and a boiler yard.

"We found three ferries between various points of Liverpool and Birkenhead, the fare two-pence. It is not unworthy of notice that the receipts are higher at that small rate than when it was double the sum. It is designed ere long to have steamers plying between the two shores every fifteen minutes, which will certainly be making a near approach to the convenience of a bridge. From one landing-place on the Birkenhead side, a railway starts for Chester, where it is continued by another line to a point on the Grand Junction, and thus brought in union with the principal ways of this kind in the kingdom. The mails from London to Dublin are conveyed from London to Dublin by this route, and it is commonly used by parties passing between the Irish and English capitals. The steamer passes from Kingston near Dublin to Birkenhead in about ten hours, and from thence a mail-train will convey passengers to London in about the same time. It is also contemplated to have a railway to Manchester, a ship canal to connect the Mersey and the Dee, and various other great works.

"It may be inquired how far Birkenhead is a built and inhabited town, and the answer is, that the actual population a few months ago was found to be about fifteen thousand. In 1823, it was a few hundred, and probably in ten years it will be approaching a hundred thousand. Land which a few years ago hardly possessed a value, is now selling £6 a square yard, and by good speculations in that line, large fortunes have been acquired. We now take leave of the subject, with best wishes for the success of Birkenhead. Of the probabilities of that success we say not a word; but we feel assured that, if the contemplated works shall be duly completed, the banks of the Mersey will present the grandest monument which the nineteenth century has erected to the genius of Commerce and Peace."

#### FERRIES AND RAILWAYS.

In entering upon a sketch of Birkenhead, the Ferries and the Railways are, from their importance, entitled to a priority of notice. From the most remote period to which the history of Birkenhead can be traced, its prosperity has ever been intimately connected with the Ferry across the Mersey. Among the earliest records of the ancient Priory, are licenses for the erection of hotels, and a grant of the Ferry to the prior and monks. The right of ferry so granted has frequently been made the subject of litigation; nearly five centuries have elapsed since it is first noticed in a court of law, and numerous are the suits that subsequently occurred, previously to the verdict in

the Monks' Ferry case, which must have removed all doubt as to the parties in whom the right is vested. A few years after the dissolution, the ferry *from* Birkenhead to Liverpool was granted to Ralph Worsley, by the deed under which the Cheshire estates of the Convent were conveyed to him; and in the same year, 1545, Henry VIII. as Duke of Lancaster, leased the ferry *from* Liverpool to Cheshire,\* to Sir William Molyneux, Knt. This had always been separate and distinct from the passage *to* Liverpool, and when not under lease from the Crown was always separately accounted for in the returns of the Minister's money; yet in 1626 an information was filed by the Attorney-General for the Duchy of Lancaster, on the complaint of Sir William Molyneux against Sir Thomas Powell, in the pleadings upon which, Powell swore that he believed he had the right of ferry both ways. After a contest of five years duration, a decision was given, in 1631, against Powell, who by his will devised the profits of the ferry to Liverpool to his daughter, Frances Norris, for the space of twelve years from his death.

In 1726 "Woodside house, the ferry-boat and house," were leased by Ann Cleveland, the executrix of John Cleveland, for a term of eleven years, at the annual rent of £39; and in the next lease which occurs, there is a covenant to pay the Hon. Thomas Molyneux forty shillings per year, for "the taking of passengers from Liverpool town side." The charge was then twopence per head each way, "the people brought from Liverpool are used to pay one penny for landing."

The Woodside Ferry Station has been thrice removed. It is generally supposed to have been originally at, or near to, the present Monks' Ferry Hotel, although the remains of a landing place were found in excavating the works at the Birkenhead Ferry. The quay subsequently made at Woodside was formerly a very indifferent concern. It is described as being, in 1773, when William Woods was tenant of the Ferry, under Mrs. Price, as "a simple heap of large stones extending from high water mark to within twenty-five feet of low, and there terminated by an immense pebble or boulder

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\* This Ferry was then of much greater value than that from Birkenhead, being in the Bailiff's account for that year worth £14 6s. 8d., while the latter is returned at £4 6s. 8d. In 1626, when under lease to Molyneux, it was sold by the Crown to the City of London; in 1635 it was bought by Lord Molyneux, who leased it to the Corporation of Liverpool. In 1672 the Town and Lordship of Liverpool were demised to the Corporation for the term of 1000 years, at an annual rent of £30, reserving the ferry boats and passage across the river; and finally, in 1777, Charles William, first Earl of Sefton, sold the fee-simple to the Corporation, together with the "ferry boats, battelage, and passage" over the river, which he had previously leased to other parties.

stone placed on a firm sandy shore." It stood about 150 yards to the northward of the present Woodside pier, and from the top of the quay a road run nearly due south to the boat house, which was situated within the garden of the Woodside Hotel. At this period, 1773, Woods kept one single-masted ferry-boat for corn, potatoes, and other produce; to this he afterwards added another, and he had also two, and at last three, smaller boats for passengers. They were, however, by no means equal to those belonging to the Liverpool boatmen, which being exclusively for passengers, were sharper built and much better sailers than any of Woods', whose larger boats never went more than once in the day. He was succeeded by one Blundell, who held the ferry upwards of twenty years, without effecting much improvement in its management. In a recent trial Blundell's son deposed that in his father's time there were only the Hall, the ferry-house, and three cottages, in Birkenhead, except Toad Hole, now known as Road hall, and two or three cottages near the Old Grange. The public accommodation was very indifferent; his father's boats were those that Woods had owned; and when a traveller arrived, he had to wait until one was ready to take him over, in preparing for which, it is probable, Blundell would not much inconvenience himself, as he kept the only public-house in the neighbourhood. It must, however, be observed that passengers from the north-west of the Hundred generally went by the Old Ferry at Poulton; and as the ancient Ferry of Carlett, now Eastham, was at that time in repute, the passengers by way of Birkenhead would not be very numerous. Mr. Hugh Williams, recently deceased, succeeded to Roberts who had followed Blundell, in 1822; he made considerable additions to the establishment, placed several steam-boats on the Ferry, and in the following year Mr. Price was induced by the increasing influx of residents in the township and neighbourhood, to order the erection of a new pier, the present landing slip. To this he was perhaps stimulated by the excellent pier and basin that had been constructed at the Birkenhead Hotel, at which he had expressly given the right of ferryage. The new slip, an immense structure of solid cemented masonry, extending to the low-water mark, about two hundred and ten yards in length, descends so gradually that carts can use it without difficulty. Its breadth was thirty feet, but it has latterly been widened by the Birkenhead Dock Company, and the extreme breadth is now eighty feet, having in the centre a wall or horizontal pier of the width of twenty feet. The object of this wall, which at the top is level with the roadway, is to afford shelter to passengers landing and departing



when it blows fresh either up or down the river; it forms a breakwater to prevent the water rushing over the pier, and the leeward side may be always taken by the packets to secure that advantage. The wall extends to the foot of the pier, is well flagged and surrounded by a stone ballustrade, rendering it a safe and agreeable promenade, for the suggestion of which the public are indebted to the Lords of the Admiralty, although the proposal was cheerfully acceded to by the Commissioners of Birkenhead.

Notwithstanding the additions that Mr. Williams had made, the increasing population of Birkenhead and the neighbouring townships requiring accommodation beyond what he was either able or willing to give, several of the principal inhabitants, in 1835, formed themselves into a company, and undertook to work the ferry on their own account. They purchased Williams's lease, of which about seven years were unexpired, paying £6500 for the surrender and the goodwill of the Ferry. The rent, at the time of commencing the new concern, was £1000 per annum. Mr. Price agreed to extend the lease to the term of twenty-one years, on the payment of an increasing rent of £250 every five years, commencing May, 1835. The capital of the new company was £25,000, raised by 1000 shares, of £25 each. It appeared to commence under most favourable circumstances; the £25 per share, was payable by twenty monthly calls of twenty-five shillings each, and at the close of the first year a profit was declared equal to two of the monthly calls, and credit was given to that amount, instead of an actual payment being made.\*

The period was now at hand when a great revolution was about to be made in the affairs of the township. Since the first introduction of the Railway System, a line from Chester towards Liverpool seems to have been regarded with peculiar favour by those engaged in such adventures, and in the same year that witnessed the Royal Assent given to the act for the construction of the line between Liverpool and Manchester, notices were given of an intended application to Parliament for a line from the city of Chester to the township of Birkenhead. The company was hardly formed when a rival

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\* There was, however, no actual profit, and there ought not to have been any dividend at all, much less £2 10s. upon a payment of only £12 10s! The heavy expenses incurred in the erection of sheds, stables, offices, &c., even the repairs of some boats, was put down as Capital Stock, much on the same principle that an old patched coat might be called worth more than a new one, because the expense of mending it had been added to the tailor's bill.

line was announced, and a different route suggested. The requisite surveys for each were made, but the proceedings were stopped in Parliament, by the rejection of both bills. But the evidence that had been adduced in favour of the project showed the value of the proposed line. The intercourse between the two towns was immense, the country did not appear to present any engineering difficulty, and the distance from Liverpool to Birmingham was not only eight miles less by way of Chester and Crewe than *via* Warrington, but it entirely avoided the inclined planes on the Liverpool and Manchester, and the Grand Junction Railways.

The few following years were not favourable to the advancement of railways. Men waited the result of the experiment between the two great towns of Lancashire, before they entered into more extensive projects of a similar nature. Encouraged, however, by the success which attended the operations upon that line, and not a little inspirited with the dividend received from the Ferry, several of its proprietors, together with others, again directed public attention to the great advantage that would result from a line through Wirral, and in October, 1836, the Provisional Committee of the Chester and Birkenhead Railway Company announced their intention of applying to Parliament for the requisite powers.

This was immediately followed by notice of an opposing company, to construct a line from Birkenhead to Chester. The usual preliminary steps were taken, and each company, having a substantial and powerful body of proprietors, prepared for a struggle, in the Session of 1837.

It was proposed that both lines should take nearly the same course from Chester, and that the "Chester and Birkenhead," of which Mr. Stephenson was the engineer, should be continued to Woodside Ferry. Mr. Walker, on the other side, contended for the terminus of the "Birkenhead and Chester" line being near Tranmere Hotel, where the small bay called Tranmere Pool would afford greater facility of transit than could be found at any other part of the river. In addition to the opposition from each other, both lines were opposed by various landowners, and by the Directors of the Grand Junction Railway Company.

During the time the bills were before the Committee of the Commons, an agreement was made between the two companies, to refer their respective claims to Viscount Sandon and J. W. Patten, Esq. M. P., and abiding their award, the rejected line was to withdraw from the contest. This decision was in favour of Mr. Stephenson's line,

but the opposition to it was continued as vehemently as ever. The same counsel, the same agents, the same engineers, appeared actually for the same clients, though nominally for different parties; and the evidence originally intended to have been given against Mr. Stephenson's line was brought forward, although according to the award of the referees Mr. Walker's bill had been withdrawn. In the mean time a bill for the construction of a railroad from Crewe to Chester was carried without the least opposition. The connection between that City and the Grand Junction line being thus established, the proceedings on the Chester and Birkenhead Railroad Bill, were watched with intense interest, until at length, on the 8th of May, 1837, the Committee of the Commons declared the preamble of the bill to be proved.

The report of the Committee was most favourable, but their estimates do not appear in many instances to have been confirmed. The capital proposed was £250,000, a sum which "was satisfactorily proved by evidence to be more than sufficient for the purposes," but which has been far exceeded, as the cost of the line, up to December, 1843, was £512,973.\* The increase has been mainly caused by the enormous price paid to certain landholders, one of whom "became entitled, by the obligations of the law, to the fulfilment of a compromising contract made with a rival company, and another under an arbitration, by which two noble lords awarded a larger sum of money than the estimate for the land and compensation." *Directors' Report, Oct. 1839.*

The first sod was cut in May, 1838, and the line was opened to the public in September, 1840. It commences at Grange Lane, Birkenhead, and passes through Bebington, Hooton, Sutton, and Mollington, at which places stations are provided, to Brook Street, Chester, a distance of fourteen miles and three quarters. It there joins the line that runs to Crewe, distant from Chester twenty-one miles, on the Grand Junction line; the actual distance from Crewe to Liverpool, *via* Warrington, being forty-three miles.

The bridges are very numerous and mostly built of the red sandstone with which the Hundred abounds; one of them, a viaduct over the Ellesmere Canal and Mostyn Valley, erected at an expense of £20,000, deserves particular attention. In the course of its construction the line presented several natural difficulties, that required considerable engineering skill to overcome, particularly those that were encountered in

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\* "The length of the rail being fourteen miles and three quarters, the cost per mile is £34,778, exclusive of the tunnel, and the Monk's Ferry station." The entire work was constructed under the direction of Mr. John Dixon, C. E.

crossing the several inlets that branch from the Mersey. These creeks were not inaptly termed "bottomless pits" by the workmen, for the earth constantly teemed in during a period of four or five months, was swallowed up without making the least apparent impression.

When the Woodside Ferry Company commenced business, they established the fare for passengers annually contracting at £2 for one person, and £3 for two, with one pound for each additional person belonging to the same family. Notwithstanding their flattering reports, these charges were found insufficient, and they were accordingly raised in 1837, to £2 10s. for one person, and £3 10s. for two. Tickets were also sold to contractors at two shillings per dozen, the charge for casual passengers being three-pence each. These rates did not, however, long continue. In the August following, the Monks' Ferry Company, a Joint Stock Association formed in December, 1836, ran steam-packets to Liverpool for that month, although their works were not complete until April, 1838. They commenced with the same rate for contractors as the Woodside, but as the charge for casual passengers was reduced by them to two-pence, in which they were followed by the Birkenhead Ferry, the Woodside Company was obliged to submit to a similar reduction. The receipts of this Company was at this time by no means adequate to their expenditure, and their shares, which on the publication of the first annual statement, already referred to, immediately rose to a premium of upwards of a hundred per cent. gradually receded to below par. At their annual meeting in August, 1838, (many of the proprietors, being then shareholders in the Chester and Birkenhead Railway,) a proposal was made that an amalgamation between the two companies be attempted; and after much negotiation, a special meeting was held on 2nd November, when an agreement made between the Railway Directors, and a Sub-committee appointed for that purpose, was read, approved of, and confirmed by the Proprietors of the Ferry. This agreement was generally understood to be a sale and transfer of the concern; but from the following resolution adopted at a subsequent meeting of the ferry committee, relative to a dissentient shareholder, this would seem not to be the fact: "That as the notice proceeds on the unfounded assumption that the company intends to transfer the boats and ferry to the Railway Company, whereas the arrangement with the latter company being merely a transfer of the shares of those Ferry proprietors who choose to sell their shares to the Railway Company, on terms proposed by that Company, the" \* \* \* \* This distinction rendered it requisite to

keep separate books, but as the proprietors (excepting the holders of 26 shares) had acceded to the arrangement, the Woodside Ferry, though still retaining the name of the Company, had in fact become the property of the Railway Company, whose Directory formed the Committee of Management.

The Monks' Ferry Company commenced the regular working of the Ferry from the splendid establishment they had formed, at what was considered to be the site of the old Ferry, in April, 1838. Proceedings were immediately instituted against them by the Woodside Ferry Company, as the lessees of Mr. Price, and notwithstanding the verdict given against them after a trial of three days' duration, in the following August, viz.—“We find that Mr. Price had an ancient right of Ferry from Birkenhead to Liverpool, and that the defendants have infringed it by carrying passengers for hire,”—they continued to work the same. A new trial was obtained, but after a hearing of three days in the Autumn of 1839, the former verdict was confirmed; and, failing in an attempt to arrest judgment, the Directors, on the 29th of February, 1840, ceased working the Ferry, and soon afterwards determined their short and unsuccessful career by disposing of the entire establishment to the Chester and Birkenhead Railway Company.

These purchases not only required much money from the Railway Company, but many of the shareholders were dissatisfied at these heavy investments. It was difficult to persuade the proprietors of the wisdom of purchasing two expensive ferries—one of which was proved to have no right to carry to Liverpool—even before the line of road was ready, and this did not open until September, 1840. From the receipts of the following year, it was evident that the existing fares were insufficient to work the two ferries; and in their report of October, 1841, it was stated, that the Directors having found the rate charged to persons contracting for ferryage by the year was so low that it did not pay the expenditure, had “resolved to decline entering upon any further contracts with the public, and to put up check gates, each person passing through them to pay the fare of twopence each way.” This resolution, which from previous announcements had been expected, excited no little alarm. Tranmere Ferry had been closed for several years, and, like that of Birkenhead, which steadily pursued its course at the old rates, was situated at the extreme south of the town. They could afford little accommodation to the great bulk of the inhabitants, the daily payments demanded from whom, especially where there were large families, would in many instances amount to

more than the rent of their houses. From this state of embarrassment a prospect of relief was afforded, by a resolution unanimously adopted at the same meeting of the railway proprietors, immediately after they had confirmed that of the directors, viz:— “That the directors are empowered to negotiate for the sale of the Woodside Ferry to Mr. William Jackson, or to any other person, and that the result of any arrangement be reported to a special general meeting for confirmation.” Mr. Jackson, with that promptitude and decision by which all his public proceedings have been distinguished, lost no time in applying himself to the adjustment of the difficulty, and that which had been the source of alarm for months to the town, was by him surmounted in a week; for on the 15th October the Railway Company communicated to the Commissioners of Birkenhead that they had sold their interest in the ferry to Mr. Jackson. This gentleman immediately offered the benefit of the contracts he had made with the Railway Company, and with Mr. Price for his reversionary interest in the Ferry, to the township; an offer which was the more gladly accepted by the inhabitants, as a Committee appointed to examine the accounts of the Ferry Company, reported that “there was a satisfactory increase of the receipts over the expenditure, sufficient to warrant the Commissioners in recommending the purchase to the township.” The arrangements were accordingly completed, and by an act of Parliament obtained in the following Session, the Woodside Ferry became the property, together with all the Packets and the entire establishment, of the Township of Birkenhead.

Circumstances had previously occurred which greatly facilitated this and other arrangements connected with the ferries; these may be gathered from extracts from the Report of a “Committee appointed to inquire into the purchase and position of the Monks’ and Woodside Ferries,” who in their report to the Railway Company, dated the 12th of May, 1841, state “that the immense sum of £32,000 has been paid for Woodside Ferry and its boats, besides making the company subject to an annual rent of upwards of £1500, and this for a right which will terminate in May, 1836.” After stating that “the object the directors had in view does not appear very clear,” they add “they are compelled to express their disapprobation of the purchase, as being highly improvident, and not calculated to aid either effectually or permanently, the well-being of the railway.” “The Monks’ Ferry was purchased by the directors in March, 1840, for the sum of £25,000; the possession of this Ferry does not confer upon the company the power of continuing the rails to the water side, and it entails upon the

company an expense in the working of it which is very considerable." After expressing their strong disapproval of the purchase of this ferry also, the committee recommend that negotiations should be entered into, whereby they might be enabled to obtain the right to the ferries in perpetuity, in order that in ultimately disposing of them they might retain in their own hands "as much of the privilege as might be needful for the efficient working of the ferry."

While the Railway Company were thus anxious to dispose of their interest in the Ferries, the Committee of the Rate-payers who had reported upon the Woodside Ferry accounts, did not confine their praises to the bare report, but they had estimated the benefits likely to accrue from the purchase so highly, as to lead to the belief that the profits of the ferry, which would be available for the purposes of the town, would greatly reduce, if they did not supercede the Improvement Rate. All parties were therefore highly pleased with the arrangements, which secured to the inhabitants of the township as well as to the Railway Company, an undisputed right to cross the river, and at a public meeting of the Rate-payers, held in October, it was resolved "that an Act of Parliament be obtained to embody provisions for assuring the property to the township, and applying the surplus of profit to the reduction of the rates."

When the referees in Parliament decided in favour of the existing line of Railway, they caused clauses to be inserted in the act fixing the terminus at Grange lane, at a point nearly equi-distant from the Ferries of Woodside, Tranmere, and Birkenhead, and preventing any extension being made to Woodside, except lines connecting Grange Lane with the other two Ferries were made *pari passu*. Much annoyance and delay to passengers, as well as a very great increase of expenditure on the part of the Company, resulted from these restrictions, which parliament had refused to rescind. The inhabitants had also in a public meeting refused to permit rails to be carried over the streets to the Monks' Ferry, and the Directors of the Railway were therefore unable to extend the line beyond Grange Lane; but availing themselves of the opportunity afforded by this negotiation, they obtained permission to make a tunnel to the Monks' Ferry,\*

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\* The Tunnel which is nearly five hundred yards long, has excavated and embanked approaches, with one shaft near the middle for ventilation. About fourteen chains have an inclination of one in 137; twenty-four have one in 150, and the remainder is level. About 242 yards were driven through sand and clay, and 255 through indurated red sandstone. The height above the rails is 14 feet 6 inches, the width between the springs 15 feet. The arch which is semicircular with a segmental invert is two feet thick, constituted partly of brick and partly of stone. The area of the station is large, being from the mouth of the tunnel to the river side 250 feet long and 120 in width, between high retaining walls of rusticated stone-work surmounted by a height of brick-work and topped with stone coping, falling in steps toward the river. It was constructed under the immediate direction of Mr. Alfred Yarrow, Civil Engineer, now Surveyor for the County.

whereby passengers might be brought to within a few yards of the place of embarkation, at which steamers are always in readiness to receive them. An application for an injunction to restrain the cutting, was made on behalf of the proprietor of Tranmere Ferry, but refused, as the restrictions were held to apply only to the existing ferries—those named in the act,—and the tunnel has since been sanctioned by Parliament.

The population of Birkenhead, which has so rapidly increased since the Woodside Ferry became vested in the township, called for further accommodation, and the packets have been increased to six, some of which are far beyond the average size of ferry-boats.\* They are all worked with the greatest regularity, starting from Liverpool and Woodside every half-hour, from five in the morning until midnight, and generally crossing the river in eight minutes. Separate boats are employed for the conveyance of heavy luggage and merchandize, and extra packets are frequently placed on the Ferry. But all are found to be inefficient; the exigencies of the town and neighbourhood require more vessels. Others are now building, and nothing but the shamefully neglected state of the Liverpool landing-places prevents their departing every quarter of an hour.† The receipts for the carriage of goods and passengers for the last year (ending 22nd April, 1845) were £21,305 1s.

In September, 1843, proposals were made by the Directors of the Railway to the Commissioners of Birkenhead, for the sale of the Monks' Ferry Estate; after some negotiations these were accepted, and an Act of Parliament has subsequently been obtained to confirm the arrangement. At present the departure of the packets from this ferry is regulated by the railway trains, of which there are eleven daily, and as

\* The *Queen* and the *Prince*, each 200 tons and 60 horse power; the *Nisa*, of 180 tons and 60 horse power, the *Eliza Price* and *Cleveland*, each of 150 tons and 50 horse power; all these packets are of iron. There is also the *Kingfisher*, of 150 tons and 40 horse power, with several small craft, usually employed in carrying merchandize, furniture, &c.

† There is reason to believe that some alteration is about taking place in these arrangements at Liverpool. The Dock Committee, having advertised for plans, and offered premiums for the two best, had nearly three hundred models and drawings laid before them. After months of deliberation they awarded two prizes; the first, of £200, to a gentleman whose plan they declined, because it was impracticable, as will readily be conceived when it is stated that it mainly consisted of "three barges, united together by hinges of cast iron; upon the edge nearest the shore, slips, hung to the quay with cast iron hinges, were to rest, and the tendency, by their weight, to overturn the barge was to be counteracted by placing ballast upon the bottom of the opposite side of the barge." Subsequently the talents of Mr. Cubitt have been put in requisition, and his suggestions have met the approval of the Admiralty and the local authorities. His plan, however, appears but a poor affair; it will be found very inadequate to the accommodation of the many thousands that daily cross the river by the ferry-boats, and the difficulty and danger will be still further augmented by the Coasting and Irish packets, which are to use it.



the boats take casual passengers also, the additional accommodation afforded by them is very great; the landing at the pier is excellent, and the packets are worked with as much regularity as their connection with the trains will admit.

The Birkenhead Royal Mail Ferry, the property of the Corporation of Liverpool, by whom it was purchased from the executors of Messrs. Hetherington and Grindrod, is situated at the south-east angle of the township. It is supplied with six commodious packets, which under the direction of Messrs. Willoughby, by whom the ferry is rented, maintain a regular communication with Liverpool every half-hour. The pier is very favourably adapted for the embarkation of carriages, and it appears to be the most frequently used by travellers having their own equipages.

The Railroad had, up to 1842, been a very losing affair; the expenditure had more than doubled the estimate; price of shares had receded to one-third of their original cost; even new £50 shares were issued at a discount of £33, and nothing appeared likely to save it from bankruptcy, except a reduction in the fares, which would put an end to the competition the line experienced from other modes of conveyance. The experiment was tried and found to answer; the receipts increasing so much that the Directors were enabled to declare a dividend of 20s. per share.

In 1843 a company was formed under the auspices of the London and Birmingham Company, that undertook the construction of a line between Chester and Holyhead; and an arrangement was made on the 5th February, between the Directory of the Holyhead Company and the Birkenhead Board for an amalgamation. At a meeting of the shareholders in the latter line, held on the 8th of February, 1844, the directors reported, "The proprietors will no doubt be already aware that a Railway is proposed to be carried from Chester to Holyhead, by a company intending to apply to Parliament this session for authority to make it.

"Negociations have in consequence taken place between your Directors and the Promoters of that Railway, for the purpose of obtaining for you a share in the management and capital of that Company. The result has been that it is proposed to amalgamate the Chester and Birkenhead with the Holyhead Railway: the stock of this Company to be taken at par; the proprietors of it to be entitled to an equal amount of stock in the Holyhead Railway, or to be paid for their shares at par.

"A part of the same proposal is, that the Proprietors of this Company be entitled

to nominate three Directors, and to have allotted £300,000 of the capital, in proportion to the interest held respectively by them in this Company."

This announcement was received with the greatest satisfaction by the Birkenhead proprietors, whose shares immediately rose from £15 @ £16 to £32. An application was made to Parliament for the requisite powers to form the Holyhead line, it being intended in the following session (1844-5) to apply for an act for the amalgamation of the two companies. For a while all apparently looked well, and after some slight opposition the bill for the construction of the road was carried; but it had scarcely passed ere a disposition was evinced to cancel the arrangement that had been made, and numerous objections against the union of the two companies were discovered. The Birkenhead Proprietors considered they were fully justified in withdrawing from the contract by the alleged miscalculations of the Chester and Holyhead Company. They argued that their agreement was contingent upon certain promises and events which had neither been performed or accomplished. They referred to the statements made to them when their sanction was requested; to the assurance that as Government supported the measure, the Company would be permitted to use the bridge over the Menai Straits; a permission subsequently refused as the construction of the bridge rendered it absolutely impracticable; they complained that the estimates would therefore be increased from £2,000,000 to £2,400,000; and also that instead of an annual allowance of £50,000 for the period of 20 years for the conveyance of mails, &c., Government would only allow £35,000 for 5 years, and moreover that instead of one entire and integral line, as promised, they had only obtained an act for a line to Holyhead, in which was the important break near Bangor, and over the Straits. Under these circumstances, at a meeting of the shareholders, convened to give their assent to the Amalgamation Bill, on the 15th March, 1845 a strong feeling against the measure was shewn, and a sub-committee was appointed "to further negotiate with the Chester and Holyhead Company." In the course of a fortnight they reported to the shareholders that they had made an offer of the Birkenhead line to the Holyhead Directors, "based not upon what the Railway might be worth to the Chester and Holyhead Company, but upon what it is worth, upon a moderate computation, to you," which being refused, "it remained for them to recommend you to strenuously resist the proposed bill, and to petition Parliament under the seal of the company against it." The recommendation of the Committee was carried by a majority of more than ten to one, it not being too

much to presume that the current price of the shares, now risen to £38, had had its effect upon the minds of the shareholders. Much apparent indignation was exhibited by some of the directors who seemed anxious to carry out the original agreement. One of them could never allow his "name to go forward as supporting a proceeding which he could not but think was highly discreditable, and therefore to preserve his freedom of action had no other course left but to resign his seat at the directionship."\* No less than four other directors imitated the example thus afforded them, but, singularly enough, the aggregate of all their votes, *if they did vote*, with those of their friends, and those of the proxies entrusted to them, only amounted to two hundred and fifty-seven.

The Holyhead Company nevertheless pressed the bill for the union of the two lines, but the Committee of the Board of Trade reported against the measure, upon which the Committee of the Commons then sitting on the bill declined to entertain the amalgamation clauses; those for supplying the deficiencies in the former act were carried, and legislative powers were thus obtained to construct an integral line.

Although the decision of Parliament prevented the union of the two Companies, each of them will be greatly benefitted by the traffic that must be introduced to it by the other. In addition to this, however, several other important schemes were announced in 1843, which as they opened a direct communication with some of the more densely populated districts of the Kingdom, cannot fail to be as beneficial to the township as they will be advantageous to the Chester and Birkenhead Railroad, to which in fact they will be feeders.

Such is the "North Wales Mineral Line," which received the Royal Assent in 1844. By this road, which commencing at Wrexham, joins the Holyhead line a few miles from Chester, and is continued upon it until it meets the Birkenhead line, coals can be brought to any extent, from the vast beds near its Welsh terminus; and its value to existing lines will be further enhanced by one now in progress from Wrexham to Shrewsbury, a town from which four other new lines are projected, connecting it with Stafford, Birmingham, Worcester, and the coast of Wales.

Several other lines have also been advertized for the purpose of connecting

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\* Mr. Potter, by whom these remarks were made, did vote for the amalgamation; and Mr. William Jackson was abroad at the time. The number of votes against the union was 2807, for it 257, leaving a majority of 2550 against the measure.

Birkenhead, by different routes, with Manchester, the manufacturing districts, and North Wales. Such is the "Chester and Manchester Direct, with a Branch to Birkenhead," which, commencing at Chester, proceeds by Frodsham and Preston Brook to Warrington, and thence by Lymm and Stretford to Manchester, which, town by a branch from Frodsham towards Hooton, is thus connected with Birkenhead. "It is confidently expected," adds the prospectus, "that this line will be the precursor of another scheme of no ordinary importance, that of rendering Chester an efficient port for large vessels."

A third line has also been projected from Birkenhead to Wales. It is proposed to commence at the docks, and to run in a westwardly direction towards Hoylake, whence it will skirt along the shore of the Dee to a little beyond Parkgate. At this part the river is rather more than three miles in width, and it is intended to cross the same by an embankment to Flint, from which town the railway would be extended to Mold. The promoters propose to continue the present artificial channel of the Dee to their embankment, which would be furnished with flood gates to retain the waters of the river, a measure which they state would improve the navigation of that river, while it will enable them to reclaim eight thousand acres of land.

Another addition to the Railway interests of this town has been suggested under the title of the "Birkenhead, Lancashire, and Cheshire Junction." This was partially brought forward in the last session, as the Birkenhead, Manchester, and Cheshire Junction, but after a severe struggle was thrown out on Standing Orders, the merits of the measure not having been brought before Parliament. The consequent postponement of the bill, which at the time was a source of disappointment, may ultimately prove advantageous, for it has enabled the Provisional Committee to make considerable alterations in the scheme, and to strengthen their Directory.

The line now proposed commences at the Hooton Station on the Chester and Birkenhead Railway, and skirting the south side of the Mersey, passes through Frodsham, and crosses the Grand Junction Line at Preston Brook; it then proceeds to Warrington, whence it is to be continued in almost a right line to Stockport. Near Altrincham it will intersect the road now making from that town to Manchester, thus forming a more direct communication between the latter and Warrington, than is afforded by the present line.

The short connecting line between Stockport and Ashton is also expected to

add materially to the intercourse between this and the manufacturing part of Cheshire. Surveys are also making of the country between Frodsham and the salt district of Cheshire, to which it is intended a line shall branch from the former. When these projects are completed, and a double set of rails laid down on the Chester and Birkenhead line, it will be difficult to conceive a town better supplied with railways than Birkenhead, more especially when it is borne in mind that the tramroads are to be carried to the warehouses, and even to the dock quays, whereby goods may be discharged from the ships, by their own tackle, into the trucks or carriages on the railroad.

Under these circumstances shares have attained a considerable premium, notwithstanding the threatened opposition of established companies and rival schemes, by some of which it is proposed to carry lines over nearly the same ground.

The following extracts from the Report of the Committee of the Board of Trade, dated 16th April, 1845, will show the favourable opinion entertained by that Department, of the line which was discussed last year. The present proposed Railway is nearly similar to that which is referred to in the report, several lines then projected having since been amalgamated in the Birkenhead, Lancashire, and Cheshire Junction:—

“The lines of railway which may be described as running in almost a parallel direction to, and, to a certain extent, competing with the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, have mainly in view the accommodation of Birkenhead, on the Cheshire side of the River Mersey, which is rapidly rising to be a town of importance, and an idea may be formed of the traffic of the place from the fact that, in 1843, the number of the passengers crossing the Mersey, which is about 1,300 yards wide, by steamers, which ply every half-hour, at the fare of 2d., exceeded two millions.

“The Act of 1844, empowered the Commissioners to make a tidal basin, docks, &c., and these works, together with other extensive accommodations for commerce, are now in progress. The area of the principal dock is said to be 150 acres, with 19 feet minimum depth of water. The tidal harbour will cover 40 acres, and be accessible to all vessels drawing under 15 feet of water, and there will be, also, a harbour of refuge and a beaching ground.

“The traffic of Birkenhead as a town, irrespective of the docks, could not maintain a railway towards Manchester, as it must still be regarded as little more than a suburb of Liverpool, where its principal inhabitants have their places of business, and whence they go to Manchester by the Liverpool and Manchester Railway. Birkenhead has, moreover, but little trade in goods.

"The establishment of the docks, however, will cause great alterations, and the question depends on a prospective rather than a present view of what Birkenhead requires.

"If the present means of transit only are allowed, Manchester goods can be sent to Birkenhead for shipment only by one of two modes, the Liverpool and Manchester Railway or the canals. If by the railway, the goods must be unpacked from the trucks at Liverpool, shipped on board the river craft, and either landed at Birkenhead and re-shipped in the outward bound vessels or transhipped from the river craft into the outward bound vessels in the docks; either method being inconvenient, subject to delay, and likely to be expensive, on account of the goods being so often turned over. If by the canals, the goods must also be subject to the delays which attend all navigation, and the power of answering prompt orders will be denied to the manufacturers who may desire to send their goods to Birkenhead.

"Moreover, a low rate of charge on the carriage of goods is essential to the success of this great undertaking of the docks, and any combination of circumstances having a tendency in an opposite direction must, by so much, mar the anticipated good. The results expected in a national point of view from the establishment of Birkenhead as a port, are reduced charges on imports and exports, and a consequent increase in trade; and these results cannot be attained unless the railway charges be brought down to a low scale.

"The Birkenhead, Manchester, and Cheshire Junction commences at the Hooton station of the Birkenhead Railway, and terminates at Manchester, with a branch to Stockport; it is promoted by the parties who projected the Birkenhead docks, which is highly important to the subject, and it gives far greater facilities for trade than the other lines. From Stockport and its neighbourhood the line is more direct. By it also, competition with the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, and with canals, would be established for the Birkenhead traffic. This competition could scarcely injure the Liverpool and Manchester Railway Company, and its legitimate traffic would continue in its present course; but, considering that this company's traffic has been yielding a profit of 10 per cent. for several years, no hardship would be inflicted on them by sanctioning a measure which would even have the effect of confining their profits to that limit.

"The Birkenhead, Manchester, and Cheshire Junction Railway Company offer to bind themselves in their act to a maximum tariff for first-class passengers of 2d. per mile; second-class passengers, 1½d. per mile; third-class passengers 1d. per mile. Two trains of the third-class to run at the ordinary speed. Coals and minerals to be carried at 1d. per ton per mile.

"Considering, therefore, that the Birkenhead, Manchester, and Cheshire Junction Railway, together with the Altrincham and South Junction scheme, forms a comprehensive measure; that, in connection with the Birkenhead docks, they offer superior advantages with regard to the manufacturing districts; that an indirect competition with the existing line, a direct competition with the canals, and its proposed tariff of charges, together with the rivalry between Liverpool and Birkenhead, will afford great facilities to commerce; and that the trade of Birkenhead, when fully brought into action, may not unreasonably be expected to prove sufficient to maintain the line with its branches, we are of opinion, that the Birkenhead, Manchester, and Cheshire

Junction, together with the South Junction and Altrincham, are measures that may with advantage be adopted.

"The Chester and Birkenhead Railway Extension to the Birkenhead docks is very desirable. Indeed, the dock scheme would be incomplete without it."

#### THE DOCKS.

In treating upon the neighbouring town of Liverpool, every writer has considered the Docks as entitled to the most prominent situation in his notices of that great commercial mart, and it is evident that the extensive docks and harbour now forming on the opposite shores of the Mersey are equally deserving of attention in any description of Birkenhead.

Wallasey, at an early period, was no inconsiderable rival to Liverpool. Both were creeks under the parent port of Chester, where the custom-house was situated. The exposed situation of the anchorage in the Mersey would naturally suggest the necessity of some sort of shelter for shipping in the winter season, and accordingly it is found that in the reign of Elizabeth a mole, or quay, had been constructed for lading and unlading vessels, of which fifteen then belonged to the port, navigated by eighty-nine men, and of the burthen of 259 tons.

The natural position of the docks in Liverpool would appear to have been upon the margin of the ancient "Poole," running in a north-east direction; but instead of embanking it and furnishing it with quays, it seems to have been gradually filled up, and covered with streets and houses, which, from their low and swampy situation, are necessarily unhealthy, and frequently, after heavy rains, liable to be flooded. The western part of the creek was formed into a dock, called the Old Dock, by virtue of an Act passed in 1708, and its site is now occupied by the Custom-house. The "Dry dock," recently converted into a wet dock, bearing the name of Canning, and the Salthouse Dock, were constructed under powers granted in 1738; but the increasing traffic of the port rendered them quite inadequate to its exigencies, and further accommodation could not be found inwards; it could only be obtained by encroachments upon the shores of the river. The King's, Queen's, and Prince's Docks were accordingly constructed upon space gained from the Mersey; but all were insufficient, and the commerce of the port was suffering severely for want of accommodation, when, in 1826, public attention was drawn to the facilities afforded on the Cheshire side of the river,

In that year Sir John Tobin and the late Mr. Laird bought a large tract of land on Wallasey Pool, which was surveyed by several eminent engineers, who reported so favourably of its capabilities for dock purposes, that the Corporation of Liverpool purchased it from them, at a profit of several hundred per cent. Other considerable purchases, near the Pool, were immediately afterwards made from Mr. Price, "upon the clear understanding that the land is to be appropriated to the purposes of trade connected with the interests of the port of Liverpool, and that the Corporation will, as speedily as possible, apply to the legislature for power to carry such intention into effect," and accordingly, on the 28th October, 1828, notice was given by the Corporation of an intended application to Parliament for "a Bill for the making, constructing, and maintaining of a Dock or Docks, on Wallasey Pool." This intention was, however, frustrated by the Dock Committee, who did "not concur in the propriety of such application, as the [then] present accommodation, with that now constructing, containing together a space of 90 acres and 3384 yards, would be amply sufficient to supply the wants of this port for many years to come."

It was in making the requisite surveys connected with these movements that Telford, one of the most eminent marine engineers that ever existed, looking from Bidston Hill over Wallasey Pool at high water, exclaimed "Liverpool was built on the wrong side of the Mersey." In his report, which also bears the signatures of Robert Stephenson and Alexander Nimmo, and is dated May, 1828, the following description of the Pool occurs:—

"Wallasey creek runs for nearly two miles from the Mersey, where it is stopped by an embankment, through which the waters of 3000 acres of Marsh land pass by a tunnel. The Pool, below the embankment, covers about 340 acres at spring tides, and by its backwater maintains a channel through the creek, down to low-water springs, and with seventeen feet at high-water (springs) as far up as the embankment.

"On the South side of the creek, between Woodside Ferry and Bridge End, there is a bottom of sandstone rock, but this ceases at Bridge End creek, and above that place the shore is composed of firm clay, fit for brickmaking, to a depth at least of thirty feet, in which the necessary excavations for docks and basins could be carried on with great facility."

In the summer of 1843, a few gentlemen, deeply interested in land in Birkenhead, witnessing the crowded state of the port of Liverpool, resolved to attempt to carry



into effect some of the schemes, that had been previously suggested, to bring the waters, and the waste shores of Wallasey Pool, into operation. This resolution was formed in July, but not the slightest notification was made of their intentions until the 7th November, when, at the ordinary meeting of the Commissioners of Birkenhead, it was announced that considerable purchases of land had been made, that all the requisite surveys had been completed, "and that every thing was ready for their instructions, that their law-clerk should go to Parliament, for the purpose of receiving powers to make the most capacious dock that ever was made in the United Kingdom."

The most ample details were circulated by the promoters of the measure, and received by the township with a degree of satisfaction and unanimity rarely exceeded. On one point alone did any apprehension arise, and this was the expenditure. But this feeling was removed by an authorized statement that "the whole works are intended to be constructed, by the elected Commissioners of Birkenhead, with funds raised on the credit of the undertaking, and whatever rates are received beyond what are necessary to pay the interest of the loans, and whatever funds arise from property *acquired and disposed of*, will be applied in reducing the principal of the debt until the works are relieved from all incumbrances; the rate, if any be necessary afterwards, will be required merely for *maintaining* the works. Should *more* property be acquired than is necessary to discharge the debt, the *surplus* may be realized and applied to the annual charge of *maintenance*, and the works then become FREE OF ALL RATES."

The recorded opinions of the Chairman and Engineers of the Liverpool Dock Estate were, at this time, published by some of the Commercial Associations, in proof of the insufficiency of the docks on that side of the river. Large purchases of land, at the extreme north and south of Liverpool, were accordingly made by the Trustees, with a view to supply the deficiency. This land, which was most inconveniently situated, some of it at a distance of two miles from the Custom-house, was only obtained at exorbitantly high prices, while that belonging to the Corporation of Liverpool on Wallasey Pool, which they had bought expressly for mercantile purposes, appeared to have been retained by them solely for the purpose of preventing any useful adaptation of it. There were, indeed, some who complained of the conduct of the Birkenhead parties, in appropriating their purchase to dock purposes, as a sort of breach of faith, so strongly were they of opinion that such accommodation should be confined to the eastern side of the Mersey, notwithstanding the sale by Mr. Price was

made upon the express agreement that the Pool was to be appropriated to the "purposes of trade connected with the interest of Liverpool." Having, however, sold so much of their land, the Corporation appeared desirous to dispose of the remainder, and it was advertized for sale by public auction, in January, 1844; but an objection being then made to the construction of docks, an adjournment took place. At the regular monthly meeting of the Town Council in March, the Finance Committee reported that they had entered into negotiations for the sale of the land for the purpose of constructing docks, and the Council having confirmed the same, the greater part of their property was purchased by the promoters of the Birkenhead Docks, at advanced prices, and application was immediately made by them to Parliament for the requisite powers. It is impossible, within the limit of these pages, to detail the almost unparalleled contest that occurred in Parliament upon the Bill. Although the measure was supported by petitions from many of the leading merchants and shipowners of Liverpool and various parts of the kingdom, and though the absolute want of such docks was shown by the evidence of the principal officers of the Liverpool Docks, every point on which any difference could exist, or discussion arise, was disputed with the greatest obstinacy, and this too on a petition to which the Seal of the Town was affixed on the day upon which the money,—£17,000—for the deposit on the lands sold by the Corporation for such purposes, was received by them.\*

The object of the promoters was, in the first instance, to obtain parliamentary powers to enclose Wallasey Pool, which was to be effected by two distinct operations, one the enclosure of the upper, and the other, the embanking of the lower part. The first would be accomplished by a masonry dam, having in it a pair of flood-gates of 70 feet in width; and two locks, one of 50 feet and one of 30 feet, extending across the Pool from near the ship-building yards on the Birkenhead side to the Smalt Works at Seacombe. By this means the water within the large inner harbour, called "the

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\* This circumstance, which made a decidedly unfavourable impression in Parliament, was thus explained before a committee of the Lords:—"The Corporation do not object to docks, but they say, if done at all, they should be done in such a manner as not to be injurious to the port, which they maintain the works as now proposed will be. They say the additional accommodation afforded by Wallasey Pool ought not to be wasted, but should be developed by the works on that side the river, and that no scheme should be attempted by which risk of injury to Liverpool would be incurred." *Speech of Mr. Austin, Q. C.*

Great Float," of 150 acres, would be retained; and though enormously large as this "dock may be deemed for commercial purposes, it is not too large as a reservoir to contain water for scouring the basin." The water in the Float is proposed to be kept at the depth of nineteen feet, or six feet below the Liverpool datum. The "Low-water Basin" is to be formed by the construction of a massive sea wall along the low-water margin of the Mersey, from Seacombe point to the head of Woodside Ferry Pier, a distance of rather more than a mile. About the middle of the wall is an entrance, nearly 200 yards wide, to the Basin of thirty-seven acres, which will be excavated to the depth of twelve feet below low-water spring tides, and walled with convenient wharfs, having at the south end a beaching ground of sixteen acres.

This latter was the subject of much discussion in Parliament; a strong opposition being made, nominally by the owners of coasting vessels, under the pretence that the intended works would deprive them of the open beach, upon which they had previously run their vessels aground. This argument so far prevailed, that the authorities required the basin to be increased from six, as originally intended, to sixteen acres; but any advantage this enlargement could afford will be more than counteracted by a pier or breakwater, of about 200 yards in length, which the Admiralty have ordered to be built directly across the face of the basin. The total estimated expense, including £53,759 for contingencies, was £391,908, of which £198,000 was for masonry, and £80,000 for excavations.

The Bill went into Committee on the 2nd of May, but it only received the Royal Assent on the 19th of July, having been contested in every stage the forms of Parliament would permit,—even the third reading in the Lords was opposed. The most conflicting testimony was produced by the supporters and the opponents of the measure; exclusive of Government officials and harbour masters, professors of philosophy and flatmen, doctors of medicine and seamen, statisticians and pilots, shipowners and shipmasters, who were respectively brought forward on each side, a host of engineers appeared for the contending parties. The evidence of Walker, Rennie, Giles, Vignoles, Provis, Mylnes, Fletcher, Jervis, Colthurst, and Page, was arrayed against the bill, which was supported by that of Rendel, Cubit, Bidder, Buck, Robert Stephenson, and Leather, and had the concurrence of the Commissioners of the Woods and Forests, with the repeatedly expressed favourable opinion of the Board of Admiralty. The principal point in dispute was the practicability of the external works, it being contended



***SHEWING THEIR CONNECTION WITH THE RAILWAYS.***

[illegible]

*Scale of Yards*



that a depth of 12 feet below low-water at spring tides, could not be obtained, or that if it could, it would not be maintained, as it would silt up to the level of the bed of the river.

In the course of the discussions on the Bill, the formation of a Company for the erection of warehouses round the Dock Quays was announced, and in the following sessions an Act was obtained for the incorporation of that body, under the title of the Birkenhead Dock Company, who were empowered to build warehouses, and to construct several other docks communicating with the Great Float. By another Act passed at the same time, provisions were made to extend the Railway from the present station in Grange Lane, to the docks and warehouses, a distance of more than two miles. The intentions of the Company will be the better understood by a reference to the annexed plan of the harbour of Birkenhead, on which the intended docks, warehouses, and railway stations appear.

It will be seen that the Docks are on a very different plan to that generally adopted in Liverpool, the object of the Birkenhead Proprietors being to provide the greatest quantity of quay room in proportion to the water space. The Stanley, Egerton, and Westminster Docks, which lay nearly north and south, are each about 275 yards by 50; between them are two of the same length but narrower, for smaller craft. The plans and elevation of the warehouses have not yet been finally agreed upon, but they are to be built on the margin of the dock quays, so that the five docks will be bounded by six piles of warehouses, all fire-proof, and the whole surrounded by public wharfs.

More to the westward is the Albert Dock, considerably larger than the others, and also surrounded by warehouses; and still higher up, the Victoria Dock, the quays of which are to be covered with transit sheds. The gates of this dock are about a mile and a half distant from the entrance to the Low-water Basin, and the next half mile is occupied with timber and ship-building yards and graving docks. Beyond all these is another small-craft Dock, situated a quarter of a mile below Wallasey Pool.

About one hundred and twenty acres of land will be recovered by the embankments of the Low-water Basin. The engineering department of these great undertakings has been confided to James M. Rendel, Esq., F. R. S., of Great George Street, Westminster. Mr. John Tomkinson of Liverpool, contractor for the Sea Wall and Dock Works, is proceeding with the same judgment and activity that he has displayed in the many public buildings erected by him in that town. About fifteen hundred men are now

employed upon these works; and the Directors, finding that they must submit to much inconvenience, expense, and delay, if they did not provide accommodation for their numerous workmen, determined to erect a number of dwellings for their labourers and mechanics. Various descriptions of cottage property were submitted to them; and after calculating the cost and return, they decided to adopt the designs of C. E. Lang, Esq. of Birkenhead, considering that by them the greatest amount of comfort will be afforded the occupiers that can be combined with a fair return upon the capital invested. Three hundred and fifty of these dwellings were contracted for in May, and are now nearly finished. Each contains one living-room, and two bed-rooms, and is furnished with gas, and an unlimited supply of water; and all rates and taxes will be paid by the Company, the tenants paying in one fixed sum per week all charges incident to the occupation of the dwellings, which are all fire-proof.

In the immediate neighbourhood of these houses a Church is in progress of erection, which will be built and endowed by William Jackson, William Potter, and John, Macgregor, and William Laird, Esqrs., and will accommodate one thousand adults.

In Seacombe, on the opposite shore of the Pool, are two natural creeks that run some distance inland from the Float; these, which are private property, the owners propose immediately to convert into walled docks, for the accommodation of the coasting trade.

#### MARKETS.

The Commissioners for the Improvement of Birkenhead, by the act for their incorporation, were empowered to erect a TOWN HALL for the transaction of magisterial and parochial business, and a PRISON, together with a PUBLIC MARKET. Towards these purposes Mr. Price contributed an acre of land for the site, in addition to paying a moiety of the expenses of obtaining the act of parliament. The erection of the buildings was committed to Mr. Rampling, architect, of Liverpool and Birkenhead; his designs having been approved by the Commissioners, they immediately entered into a contract with Mr. Walter Walker for the completion of the works. The front elevation, which is of Storeton stone, in the Grecian style, comprehends an entrance gate to the market and two wings; the one to the left extending 74 feet, contains

offices for the magistrates, overseers, and commissioners ; behind which, and communicating with them, is a capacious room 72 feet by 24 feet, divided by two screens of columns and folding doors ; this room is lighted by three handsome cast-iron dome lights, and has an entrance hall and other requisites. The opposite wing, the entrance of which is in Hamilton Street, contains public offices for the police, a dwelling-house for the constable, and also day-rooms and cells for the prisoners. It is probable the entire fabric will, ere long, be removed, as it is much too small.

The area of the Market, one side of which was formed by the offices, and the other three enclosed by walls, was 185 feet by 90 feet. It contained twenty-five shops, and many standings for fish, butchers' meat, poultry, butter, vegetables, and everything usually sold in markets. For a while it answered every expectation that its promoters had formed of its utility. But extensive as was the edifice, it was soon evident that it would be utterly inadequate to the wants and exigencies of the rapidly increasing population of the neighbourhood ; and rather than attempt to enlarge the building, the Commissioners resolved to erect another on a far larger scale. Availing themselves of a portion of their lands remaining unoccupied, they purchased more, immediately adjacent, so as to afford them an eligible site for a market, of greater dimensions than any in Liverpool, except the far celebrated St. John's Market. The length of the new Hall, which was opened in July, 1845, is 430 feet ; its breadth 131 feet ; forming a covered space of 6259 yards or upwards of an acre and a quarter.\*

The building is lighted by double rows of skylights in each of the three roofs, in which, by means of deep louvre openings, extending under the lights the entire length of the hall, effectual ventilation was expected to be secured ; but to render this more certain, further provision has been made in the semicircular windows along the sides of the building. There are forty-two shops and seventy-six stalls, with several tables, extending the entire length of the whole market, for the sale of horticultural produce,

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\* Its dimensions, as compared with the different covered markets of Liverpool, are as follows :—

St. John's Market	555 feet long by 135 feet broad.
Scotland Road Market	219 ditto 138 ditto
Great George St. Market	201 ditto 198 ditto
Gill Street Market	184 ditto 131 ditto
BIRKENHEAD NEW MARKET	430 ditto 131 ditto
BIRKENHEAD OLD MARKET	185 ditto 90 ditto



and there is ample room for more when required. The shops are wainscoted with Dutch tiles, those for the sale of fish have marble tables or slabs, and every shop is provided with stoves and flues for the purposes of warmth and ventilation. Large iron tanks are placed in each corner of the hall, for the supply of water by pipes and taps to the various shops, attached to each of which are vaults, and those used by the fish-mongers are also furnished with ice-houses.

The external form of the Market Hall is quadrangular, and being solely constructed of stone, brick, and iron, is considered fire-proof. The area is covered with a wrought-iron roof of light and elegant workmanship, divided into three bays, the centre being supported by columns, connected by arched cast-iron girders. This arrangement divides the hall into three arcades, of which the central is the narrowest, but the standings being thrown outwards towards the sides, it affords the widest promenade, being thirty feet clear; each of the other arcades are fifty feet.

There are six entrances to the Market; two from both Albion and Hamilton Streets, one from Market Street, and another from Oliver Street; and at the intersection of the avenues, are elegant lofty fountains of Portland cement.\*

The Market Hall is surrounded on all sides by an open area, protected by a low parapet wall, and surmounted with a handsome cast-iron railing. The object of this area is to afford free communication with the vaults that form the basement story, in which are stores nearly corresponding in size with the shops above, and a thorough circulation of air is effected in each, by independent flues which rise to the top of the building. The centre part, which may be entered from the sides or the end of the market, forms a vast area, affording ample space for storage of every description.

The floor of the Market is one of the largest ever constructed upon cast-iron pillars; it rests on 115 columns. The Hall is lighted by ninety-two elegant globe lamps; and at each end over the doors, will be placed illuminated clocks, which are now erecting, but from their great size, awkward appearance, and low position, they little comport with the building, to the walls of which they are attached by heavy iron braces. The roof, with its louvres\* and extensive skylights, is an object of great attraction.

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\* Some alteration will probably be made in the louvres, and in the fountains; the former admit the rain as freely in wet weather, as in high winds the spray is dashed from the latter. In either case an umbrella would be serviceable.

The building was erected by Messrs. Fox, Henderson and Co., of the London Iron Works near Birmingham, who have thus furnished Birkenhead with one of the most graceful and perfect structures of the kind in England, perhaps in Europe. About 700 tons of iron have been used in the construction of the Market, the entire contracts for which were originally made at £15,575, but various alterations having been suggested, while in progress, it has already cost about £25,000, exclusive of the land on which it stands.

The site of the late Market will be converted into an open Market for the sale of hay, straw, and other agricultural produce.

#### THE SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

In connexion with those excellent arrangements which are continually being made for the comfort and convenience of the inhabitants, the Abattoirs or Slaughter Houses are deserving of especial attention. Every one must admit that the public health is necessarily endangered by having cattle driven through a thickly populated town, to be slaughtered in yards or sheds in the closest streets: this is an evil that ought not to exist in the high period of civilization at which we have now arrived, and the establishment of beast-markets and public slaughter houses in the suburbs of large cities, where the population is least dense, and where ample and convenient space can be obtained, is therefore a measure of great public utility. The buildings for these purposes in Birkenhead, are situate on the verge of the town in a southerly direction. They are built of brick and stone; the walls are of a heavy massive character, well adapted to the object for which they are intended. The entrance, through which the cattle are driven, is by a large gate-way, over which is a lodge or residence for the keeper. On the right and left are sheds or pens for the cattle, each butcher having stalls set apart for his own beasts, with the requisite convenience for forage, &c. There are slaughter rooms, with all the necessary mechanical aids applicable for the purpose, abundance of hot and cold water, and, what is of the utmost importance, efficient drainage for carrying away all offensive matter. Every possible arrangement has been adopted that can contribute to cleanliness, and the prevention of any annoyance to the town. Proper persons are appointed to superintend the duties of the establishment, and a fixed charge is levied for the accommodation

afforded. The buildings were erected from the plans of Mr. Brine, the Surveyor of the township; and from the suitableness of the design to the object contemplated, they appear admirably suited for all the requirements of a slaughtering place.

#### GAS AND WATER WORKS.

A Company, established for supplying Birkenhead with Gas and Water, was incorporated by an act passed in 1841, by which powers were granted to light several of the townships in the lower division of Wirral. Previously to their application to Parliament, the Company, in addition to supplying many private houses, had entered into engagements with the Commissioners for a term of seventy-five years, that on the payment of an annually increasing rent of £5 per year, they should have the exclusive right to supply the town for that period. This engagement was confirmed by the act, which also provided that the rate charged for gas should be reduced when the profits exceeded ten per cent. The works are situated at the extremity of Jackson Street, from which pipes are already laid out that extend over forty miles of streets. Tranmere, with a part of Bebington, is also lighted from the same works. Since the gas was first introduced in January, 1841, the number of lamps has been regularly increasing; at present there are about 300 public lamps, exclusive of those in the Market.

The same Company have, under the authority of the same act, undertaken to supply the township with Water. The works are situated at an elevation, on the borders of Oxtan, of 118 feet above the level of the sea; the borings and sinkings are 320 feet in depth and furnish an abundant supply of excellent water, which is conveyed, by 24 miles of pipes, through every part of the town. The Works, from their elevation and ornamental chimney, form a very conspicuous object.

The Company have powers to construct Public Baths; so, indeed, have the Commissioners, and it is understood the latter are now looking out for a favourable site to appropriate to that purpose.

The present proprietors of the Company are the Messrs. Jackson; who having ineffectually endeavoured during several years to induce the Commissioners to establish such works, took the responsibility upon themselves, and subsequently obtained the act for their incorporation.

## THE PARK.

Nothing could afford a stronger proof of the public spirit and sagacity of the Commissioners of Birkenhead than this noble project. Commenced at a time when the land was obtainable on terms comparatively cheap,—before buildings had extended to its immediate neighbourhood, and yet occupying a position that will probably, ere many years, become the centre of the town,—the Park, by affording a permanent place of recreation for the surrounding population, can hardly fail to realize the warmest anticipations of those by whom it was suggested.

Birkenhead Park is not, like many, a vast tract in the hands of some lordly owner, who too generally pursues a system of exclusion by which the public are debarred the opportunity of beholding its beauties ; on the contrary, it contains extensive drives, beautiful walks, and elegant gardens, is adorned with groves, fountains, ornamental waters, and numerous sources of pleasure, all of which, by the projectors of this splendid and popular undertaking, are freely and gratuitously appropriated in perpetuity to the community, and that, too, at a period when an increasing desire prevails on the part of the aristocracy for the inclosure of lands, and the formation of private parks. It would be difficult to overrate the value of so great a boon to the public.

The construction of public Parks in the neighbourhood of large towns has for some time attracted the attention of the legislature, and their value and importance, not only in a physical but in a moral point of view, has been invariably admitted. Circumstances, however, which a few years since induced the Town Council of Liverpool to negative a proposal for the formation of one in the immediate vicinity of that town, more particularly drew local attention to the subject; and soon afterwards a motion was made, at a meeting of the Birkenhead Commissioners, for the appointment of a committee to confer with the Town Council of Liverpool, upon a proposition, then submitted, with reference to the construction of a Park, which would include some property belonging to that Corporation, in Birkenhead.

Although no report was made from this committee,—whether its members did ever meet seems rather doubtful,—the subject was by no means neglected. In the autumn of 1842 the usual Parliamentary Notices were given of the intention to apply for “an Act to authorize the purchase of land for Improvements, and the formation of a Park.” By this act, which received the Royal Assent the following year, the Commissioners

of Birkenhead were empowered to purchase the requisite lands for the formation of a public Park ; and acting upon this authority they immediately obtained about 226 acres, of which, 125 acres were appropriated in perpetuity to the public use. Of the remainder, part has been sold for the erection of detached villas and terraces, on plans and elevations approved by the Commissioners, who by fixing the rental value of the houses at a high standard, have secured respectability of appearance and regularity of design, while all edifices for trading purposes are prohibited. The owners of the houses are required to set them back twenty yards from the enclosing roads on each side, and as these are twenty yards wide, the space between the houses will be sixty yards. The purchases of the land were made on terms so favourable, that the sale of the part not required for the Park, will reimburse the township for the original cost, and the expense of laying out, planting, draining, &c.

The designs were furnished by Mr. Joseph Paxton, the celebrated landscape gardener to the Duke of Devonshire, and author of several works on Botany, who has personally superintended the works, which were commenced immediately after the act was obtained. The drives, walks, and lakes were marked out before the termination of the year, since which the works were pushed forward with such vigour—nearly a thousand men having been almost constantly employed—that the whole is now completed, notwithstanding the late unfavourable spring for planting.

In the arrangement of the Park, a serpentine drive, of nearly three miles in length, which constitutes the inner boundary of the land appropriated to building purposes, has been provided for the use of equestrians, and for carriage exercise. The central part is occupied by plantations, broad glades of turf, numerous walks, and two lakes, ornamented with rustic bridges, containing together about eight acres of water. As the surface, naturally very flat and tame, was exposed to the most violent gales, the clay excavated in making these lakes was thrown into artificial hills, of the most varied shapes and height, which are interspersed with serpentine walks, and planted with ornamental trees, and a profusion of flowering shrubs. These mounds have the effect of throwing the lakes into a more decided valley, while they furnish a most delightful shelter against the strongest winds. One of them, situated near the largest lake, is raised to a greater height than the rest, and from different points of a walk conducted over it, the lake and the principal features in the Park may be viewed to great advantage. A platform on the apex will accommodate from forty to fifty persons at the same time.

It is proposed to lower the water in the lakes, during severe frosts to the depth of two feet, in order that persons fond of skating may enjoy this exhilarating exercise with perfect safety.

From the position of the Park, and a portion of it having a sloping surface to the south-east, it commands a view of the town of Birkenhead, the elevated grounds of Seacombe, the whole of the river front and the general outline of Liverpool, with the hills beyond it, and a considerable stretch of the River Mersey.

The protection afforded by the high lands of Bidston and Claughton is favourable to the growth of trees and shrubs; and those parts of the Park which immediately surround the lakes are prepared and planted, forming a sort of garden, that will be kept more trimly than the rest, and filled with the choicest and gayest of shrubs.

The entire plot of land, once, in some parts, a low swamp, exhaling the most pestilent vapour, has now by thorough draining become dry and salubrious, adapted for the residence of the delicate and invalided. Within certain hours the whole will be open to visitors, and the drive to carriages.

There will be nine handsome lodges in different parts of the grounds. The principal entrance, situated at the south angle, facing Conway Street, presents a magnificent frontage of 125 feet, having a carriage way in the centre, through an arch of 18 feet span and 43 feet in height. On each side are two smaller arches for foot passengers, flanked by lodges that will form commodious residences. The Ionic order of architecture has been adopted, corresponding with the temple upon the Illysus at Athens. The columns are placed in couples between each arch, and support a well proportioned entablature, crowned with an open balustrade. An attic order is introduced supporting a secondary cornice, the centre surmounted with the Arms of Birkenhead. The gates, of wrought-iron, are also ornamented with the armorial bearings of the ancient priory.

Four of the other lodges are already erected; they are of different orders. One near Claughton is a perfect specimen of the architectural style that prevailed at the latter part of the fourteenth century. Another, in the modern Italian style, furnished with a campanile, from the elevated situation of the building, commands an extensive and varied prospect.

When the subject of the Park was first introduced in 1843, the total expenditure, including interest for the first seven years, was estimated at £103,576, viz :

"Cost of the Land, - - -	£69,960
Law expenses thereon, - -	540
Interest for seven years, -	23,796
Planting, &c. - - -	9,280
	———— £103,576"

The above amount has, however, been already far exceeded. The planting, excavation, making walks, masonry and iron work, amounts to £50,000, and £20,000 more will be required. But the great increase in the value of the land, has more than counter-balanced the affair. The land cost, in 1842 and 1843, from £230 to £250 per acre, averaging about one shilling per yard. In June, 1845, a large portion of that surrounding the drives, was offered for sale by the Commissioners, and about ninety thousand yards were sold, at prices varying from seven to fifteen shillings per yard,—thus confirming the calculations of its promoters.\*

This extensive Park will be a perpetual ornament to the town and neighbourhood, requiring, from its great extent, and varied walks and views, almost an entire day to inspect and appreciate its beauties; and the diversity of hill and dale, of wood and water, combined within it, will be equally open to the poorest artisan and the richest merchant.

The drives and terraces in this neighbourhood, which are in general named after public parties who have promoted the parliamentary projects of the town, contain many houses of a superior description. On the western side of the Park is the Egerton Road, immediately above which, on a bold eminence commanding an uninterrupted view of every leading object of interest within the range of vision, stands the residence of William Jackson, Esq. Lord of the Manor of Claughton, whose name will ever occupy a most prominent situation in the history of Birkenhead.

Claughton Hall is approached from an elegant lodge and gate-way by a carriage drive, through pleasure grounds of about ten acres in extent. The house, which is in the Roman style, but so chaste in detail as to approach the purity of the Grecian, has four fronts of highly wrought and polished stone, which for excellence of workmanship

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\* The actual average of the total sale was 11s. 4d. per yard;—more land has been subsequently sold.

can hardly be exceeded, although a profusion of rich carvings and sculpture decorate the entire of the exterior. The general plan consists of a bold massive centre surmounted by a magnificent Corinthian cornice, and two wings. The principal entrance is on the west side of the hall, and consists of a circular Ionic portico and balustrade. The doorway, which is very elaborate, is surmounted by a carved cornice and trusses, and in the frieze are cornucopiæ, vine leaves, and other sculptural decorations, emblematical of hospitality, encircling the armorial bearings of the owner.

The walls of the lofty vestibule are of Scagliola in imitation of granite; on each side are niches with marble figures, and over them a long panel filled with bas-reliefs from the antique. In front are three steps, on the upper of which are verd antique columns and pilasters, the space between them filled with single sheets of plate glass, extending from the floor to the ceiling, the lower part protected by an extremely beautiful scroll work of or-molu. The centre sheets of glass open as folding doors leading into the inner hall, the whole of the paintings on the ceiling and other parts of which are in *chiaroscuro*. The floor is composed of Italian marble of various colours, laid down in a mosaic pattern corresponding with that of the Certosa di Pisa. To the right is seen the circular staircase of Talacre stone, with a magnificent mahogany sculptured pedestal at the base surmounted with a candelabrum. The balustrade is of scroll work in imitation of bronze, with a handrail having couching greyhounds, every two feet asunder, to prevent accidents.

At the top of the staircase is a gallery with four columns of porphyry and white marble; the floor is inlaid with a mosaic of oak, rosewood, satinwood, maple, sycamore, and ebony.\* The centre of the gallery is decorated by two splendid carved doorways, between which are pieces of recumbent statuary. Near the bedrooms are four panels in which are painted in *fresco*, poetical figure-subjects, representing Morning, Noon, Evening, and Night. The walls of the hall, staircase, and gallery, are covered with Scagliola of the highest polish, in imitation of Sienna marble, having panels of granite and marble. They are lighted by a dome of ground glass ornamented with classic foliage, and an elegant stained glass window.

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\* This species of Mosaic, which is entirely from the designs of Mr. Reed, has never been attempted before. It is so extremely minute in detail, that there are in the Drawing Room alone no less than 3942 pieces, and 15,240 joints.



The Dining room has a massive cornice, and a frieze of scroll foliage with animals; the ceiling is divided into panels, and wrought in the style technically called French. The Library has a rich modillion cornice, and the ceiling is supported by beams grained in oak and etched in gold.

The Drawing room—32 feet long by 23 feet wide, and 16 feet in height—presents a *coup d'œil* rarely exhibited. The sides are divided by gold mouldings into panels, in which are six exquisite paintings, upwards of eight feet high, of landscapes and figures,—compositions of Italian scenery, in the Watteau style. The ceiling is richly decorated with tablets and medallions, painted in encaustic. The cornice is supported all round by beautiful and richly gilt trusses, between which are little gems of paintings, worthy the artist that in conjunction with the architect has produced this scene of splendour and beauty, each picture in which offers materials for a separate description.

The Breakfast room has a cornice of fruit and drooping flowers, with a ceiling divided into four octagonal panels on which are allegorical paintings of the seasons. The arrangements of this room appear to have been designed in accordance with an elegant Conservatory, entered from it, by doors of stained glass.

One yard in width round every principal chamber is floored with a beautiful inlaid work of satin and rosewood. Nor amid this tasteful magnificence has domestic comfort in any instance been sacrificed. There are upwards of twenty bed-rooms in the house, every room in which is ventilated by a stream of fresh air, previously warmed, entering over the door and passing through the ceiling behind the cornices. The very offices exhibit the most minute attention to arrangement, though it is impossible here to more than allude to them.

Mr. Jackson has been fortunate, not only in the unrivalled situation he has selected for his residence, but in the choice of the parties to whom the construction of the edifice was entrusted. The architect employed was Mr. Charles Reed of Birkenhead, who has well repaid the confidence reposed in him. Messrs. John and William Walker, who have erected by far the greater part of the principal buildings in Birkenhead, have, at this mansion, sustained their long established character for excellency of workmanship. As a piece of masonry it cannot be surpassed; the beautiful white Storeton stone, of which the outside is built, having afforded them every opportunity to exhibit the successful application of their ability. Mr. Parris, the historical painter





to her Majesty the Queen Dowager, so favourably known by his "Picture of London" in the Colosseum, and "the Coronation of Queen Victoria," was selected for the internal decorations of the entertaining rooms. The pleasure grounds, which require to be seen rather than described, were laid out by Messrs. Joseph & Charles Whalley, Nurserymen, of Liverpool.

## STREETS.

The greater part of the Streets in Birkenhead may, in point of width, regularity, and the elevation and general appearance of the houses they contain, be advantageously compared with those of any other town in the kingdom. A small portion alone, towards the south end of the town, built soon after the alienation of the estate, without any regard to order or arrangement, forms the only exception; and it is fortunately confined to so limited a district, as to be almost unworthy of notice. Few English towns have had the advantage that Birkenhead possesses, of being at once laid out on a large scale upon a space previously unoccupied by buildings; and it is an advantage that has not been lost.

In 1824, when the late Mr. Laird made his first extensive purchases in Birkenhead, he consulted Mr. Gillespie Graham, a surveyor and architect of eminence residing at Edinburgh, who had previously acquired much reputation by his works in that city, relative to carrying his intentions into effect. The bold and judicious designs of that gentleman were adopted; and notwithstanding their magnitude, which appeared to excite the ridicule of many, operations were commenced. Streets of a length and width, surpassing any in this part of the country, were laid out at right angles, extending even beyond the limits of the township, and at their intersections forming squares of great area. For several years the works progressed very slowly; but subsequently the original projects have been in a great measure accomplished.

In the various sales afterwards made by Mr. Price, he bound the purchasers not to erect steam-engines or other nuisances in the town; and the Act of 1843, which regulated the width of the courts and minor streets, and restricted the size of rooms and windows in small houses, directed the formation of a Health Committee, and contained various enactments of a sanatory nature.

The general sewerage of the town, which has been effected to the extent of upwards of forty miles, has been done solely at the expense of the landlords; and no

rate for this purpose can be levied on the tenantry except a trifling amount for the future repairs.

There are now upwards of one hundred Streets in Birkenhead and Claughton; several of them being of such extreme length, that they have nominally been divided into terraces, places, buildings, &c., much to the inconvenience of those whose local knowledge is derived from the inspection of a map. The names of many of them are almost unknown, except to the parties by whom they may have been given, and it is by no means uncommon to designate three or four houses as a Street. Statesmen and warriors have largely contributed to the nomenclature of the township: there is hardly a family of eminence in the County, or a Member of Parliament who has assisted in obtaining the various local acts, that has not some street, road, or terrace, dedicated to him. In many of the smaller thoroughfares, the names have originated with the builders of the first houses, and in general they seem to have been desirous of perpetuating the remembrance of themselves. It was intended to have given the various parties, places, or occurrences, whence the streets have derived their names, but so much of the ground being yet unbuilt upon, and the experience of the last year having so decidedly shewn that the names of many, now only existing on paper, may be changed, that the idea was in a great measure abandoned; and the following list, with the remarks upon it, is consequently imperfect.

*Table shewing the length and breadth of some of the principal Streets that are sewered and complete in Birkenhead.*

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Length.</i>	<i>Breadth.</i>	<i>Name.</i>	<i>Length.</i>	<i>Breadth.</i>
Argyle Street.....	850 yards	84 feet	Brook Street .....	1500 yards	60 feet
Beckwith Street...	1920	84	Camden Street ...	600	60
Bidston Road .....	1100	84	Canning Street ...	1000	60
Cavendish Street...	500	84	Chester Street.....	930	60
Cleveland Street...	2350	84	Church Street.....	700	60
Conway Street ...	3400	84	Claughton Road ...	1900	60
Hamilton Street...	670	84	Exmouth Street ...	490	60
Price Street .....	2700	84	Grange Road .....	650	60
Park Road East ...	560	84	Mason Street .....	470	60
Park Road West...	900	84	Mersey Street.....	120	60
Tollemache Street	1900	84	Park Street.....	470	60
Vittoria Street ...	650	84	Pool Street.....	200	60
Cathcart Street ...	650	78	Priory Street .....	260	60
Eldon Street .....	300	78	Watson Street ...	490	60
Bridge Street .....	1050	60	Wilbraham Street	178	60

These are all paved and macadamized throughout, and many others are in progress; the sewerage extending over seven-eighths of the town, which is in every part abundantly lighted with gas.

A few years since, the only Streets existing in Birkenhead were those leading to the church, the river, and the neighbouring villages; their names indicating their locality. Such were Abbey, Church, Priory, and Ivy Streets, lead to the neighbourhood where stand the church and the ruins of the ancient priory. Grange Street, lane, and road, leading from the convent to the old *Grangiarium*, the last ruins of which have very recently given place to the modern improvements of Claughton.

Hamilton Square, the great architectural ornament of Birkenhead, which, for extent, regularity of construction, and size of the houses, may be advantageously compared with any in the kingdom, was laid out by the late Mr. Laird, soon after his early purchases in Birkenhead, and was by him called after a family name.

This is by far the most attractive object in the town. Independently of the ground on which the buildings stand, it occupies an area of about seven statute acres. Three entire sides are completed; in the fourth is a vacancy, on which it is intended to erect a Town Hall and Public Offices. The houses are elegant stone edifices, built upon an uniform plan and elevation, in the Doric style of architecture, with the basement story rusticated; the central houses have seven pilasters, and the wing houses have each four bold columns in the front, supporting a handsome frieze and parapet. In the centre of the Square is a beautiful shrubbery and walks, comprising an area of four acres, laid out in an ornamental manner, and enclosed by iron railing.

All the houses in this Square were built by Messrs. John and William Walker, whose names have been so frequently mentioned. But they did more than merely build. When only four houses were erected, with a view to maintain the uniformity of elevation, they purchased the remaining part of the land, upon which they constructed all the houses, which they afterwards sold as they were completed.

The Streets by the intersection of which the Square is formed, Hamilton and Argyle, Cleveland and Price, were also named by Mr. Laird; the latter after the late owner of the township, Mr. Price; and Cleveland, after his predecessor, John Cleveland, Esq., formerly a merchant of Liverpool. These Streets, which run parallel to each other in right lines for nearly a mile and a half, contain many blocks of white stone houses of uniform elevation. They are each twenty-eight yards wide; and all

nuisances in them being prohibited, they form two of the best Streets in the town.

Price Street, in which are Trinity Church and the Wesleyan Chapel, is about being opened to the Monks' Ferry; and it is probable that it will be extended over the Bidston Marshes to the Sea, as it would not fail to add to the value of the land through which it would pass, and at its terminus on the sea shore, a splendid bathing establishment might be formed. Being on a perfect level, and the distance about four miles, an Atmospheric Railway was sometime since suggested, as a suitable mode of traction.

Church Street, running parallel to the river, commands at present an interesting prospect; but it is probable, that as the great extension of dock works at Liverpool will drive all the ship-builders from the eastern shore of the Mersey, carpenters' yards will be established here, the ground being admirably adapted for ship-building, and a great portion belonging to the Town Council of Liverpool.

In Grange Road are a Church, the Roman Catholic Chapel, the station of the Chester Railway, several inns, and many excellent shops. A large portion of the land at the south side, recently laid out in Streets, is the property of John Somerville Jackson, Esq., whose predilection for nautical affairs is evinced by the names he has conferred upon them, of St. Vincent, Horatio, Nelson, and Napier, after the gallant and eccentric Commodore, who visited Birkenhead on his arrival from Syria in 1841; Prince, Coburg, Sussex, and Huskisson Streets, in this neighbourhood, have also received their designation from this gentleman, as have others in different parts of the town, such as Somerville, Monk, &c.

Chester Street, the direct road from the ferry to that City, is the principal trading Street, having nearly half a mile of continuous shops; many of them of a very superior description. The want of a sufficiently large room for public meetings, for the purposes of business as well as amusement, having been long experienced in Birkenhead, induced Mr. William Laycock to build, over an extensive iron store lately erected in this Street, a suite of Assembly Rooms. The buildings, which are of white stone, have a very neat appearance, and will afford great accommodation for lectures, concerts, &c.

A quadrangular piece of land, between Chester Street and the Market, has recently been covered with a noble pile of buildings, not exceeded in any provincial town in the kingdom, to which the name of the "Market Cross" has been given by the owner,

John Somerville Jackson, Esq. In the centre a diagonal street has been formed, the passage through which is confined to pedestrians or carriages only; whereby the noise and inconvenience of carts is avoided. The buildings consist of thirty-seven excellent houses, the lower apartments being formed into shops, some of them of very large dimensions, equipped with every requisite convenience. They are built, in five distinct elevations, in the Italian style, with polished white stone from the Storeton Quarries, the exterior richly ornamented with carved work in mouldings, cornices, balconies, &c. All the windows, which are of the largest dimensions, are of plate glass; the surrounding footpaths, as well as the cross streets, are covered with Asphalte. With the exception of Hamilton Square, this is the most important work yet undertaken in Birkenhead, of which it is one of the greatest ornaments; reflecting the highest credit on the architect, Mr. Walter Scott, of Birkenhead and of Liverpool, under whose superintendence the buildings have been erected, by the Messrs. Walker, at an expense of upwards of £40,000, exclusive of the land.

A small inclosure called Parkfield deserves particular notice. It contains several detached villas in a very good style, surrounded with pleasure grounds, forming a little park of about fifteen acres. It was laid out, in 1835, by A. A. Dobbs, Esq., who then commenced making the several principal streets that diverge from it; and by the erection of various houses in and about them, gave an impetus to building in the neighbourhood, which, with a slight interruption, has still continued. Among the Streets so laid out by Mr. Dobbs, were Conway, after Conway Dobbs of Castle Dobbs, Esq.; Exmouth, after the hero of Algiers, and Hemingford Place and Terrace, after Hemingford Abbots in Huntingdonshire, of which parish the Rev. A. E. Obins, now a resident of Birkenhead, was for many years the Rector.

A large mass of Streets, now laying out towards the north and north-west parts of the town, have been called by the Dock Commissioners after parties who were instrumental in promoting their projects. Such are Stradbroke, Ilchester, Aylesford, and Bateman, after Members of the Committee of the Lords. The Commons have not been so favourably remembered; there are, it is true, Rice, after the Member for Dover, who was Chairman of the first Dock Committee; Egerton, Tollemache, and Legh, after the respected Members for Cheshire; and Brotherton, after the honourable and abstemious Member for Salford. Others have been named after the proprietors. Such is Bailey Street, from Joseph Bailey, Jun., Esq., M. P. for Worcester, Chairman of the



Dock Company; and Radcliffe, after his partner in Liverpool, Augustus Radcliffe, Esq.; Marcus, Freeman, and Brownrigg, after M. F. Brownrigg, Esq., one of the most active and influential of the Commissioners of Birkenhead.

Mallaby Street derives its name from the learned gentleman who has filled every legal situation connected with the town since obtaining the first Act for its improvement, and Townsend Street, from that of his partner. Messrs. Austin, Talbot, Hilyard, Q. C., and Webster, who have so frequently been engaged as Counsel for the town, have each a Street named after them; and so has the talented engineer to whom the construction of the docks has been confided,—James M. Rendel, Esq., F.R.S.

At the intersection of Sumner Street, so named in respectful compliment to the present Bishop of Chester, with seven other Streets, a Church is now in course of erection; and in the immediate vicinity, a parsonage, public schools, and an immense pile of buildings for the numerous labourers employed by the Dock Company.

Vyner Street, after Robert Vyner, Esq., of Gauthby, Lincolnshire. This gentleman, who owns Bidston, and the greater part of several adjacent townships, having felt much interested in the success of the Birkenhead Docks, and being unable to attend the dinner given in celebration of laying the first stone, transmitted five hundred pounds to the Chairman of the day towards the erection of an Infirmary.

Laird Street derives its name from a gentleman too well known and too much respected to require any comment. It is a continuation of Conway Street, of great width, and terminating at the new church near Bidston.

In Cloughton-cum-Grange, which at the census of 1841 contained only 40 houses, occupied by 240 persons, several new streets have lately been laid by Mr. Charles Reed for Mr. William Jackson, to whom the greater part of the township belongs, and they have been named by him. Among these are Grosvenor Road, Egerton Road, Kenyon Terrace, and Devonshire Place, all containing houses of a very superior description, which, from their elevated situation, command an uninterrupted prospect over the Mersey.

The changes that have taken place in Cloughton since the township was united to Birkenhead is surprising, and as precautions have been taken to prevent the erection of inferior houses and manufactories, it will probably continue a favourite place of abode, when the latter will have become crowded with the busy votaries of trade and commerce.

## PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

The public buildings of Birkenhead are exclusively confined to those belonging to the town, neither Government nor the County having any establishment in it. The Excise duties are collected at an inn, where the Collector, Superintendent, and other officers attend every six weeks.

The business of the Stamp Office and Post Office is transacted at the shops of the respective agents to those departments. The former is at an elegant new establishment in Chester Street, near the Market, called the Medical Hall, kept by Mr. Eastwood, a chemist, who is Sub-distributor for the Hundred. The Post Office is immediately adjacent to the Woodside Ferry.

The following is a table of the times of the arrival and departure of the mails from Birkenhead, where there are three daily deliveries throughout the town :

MAILS.	ARRIVALS.	MAILS.	BOX CLOSED.	DISPATCH.
	H. M.		H. M.	H. M.
London, South and West of Eng- land, and South Wales.....	5 0 A. M.	Dublin.....	10 0 P. M.	4 15 A. M.
Liverpool and Manchester.....	6 45 A. M.	Liverpool and Manchester.....	10 0 P. M.	5 0 A. M.
Chester and New Ferry.....	7 30 A. M.	Upton, Oxtan, and Tranmere.....	7 30 A. M.	8 0 A. M.
Liverpool, Manchester, the North of England, and Dublin.....	12 15 P. M.	Chester and New Ferry.....	8 0 A. M.	8 15 A. M.
Chester, Eastham, and New Ferry	2 15 P. M.	Liverpool and Manchester.....	10 45 A. M.	11 0 A. M.
Liverpool and Manchester.....	5 15 P. M.	Liverpool, Manchester, Yorkshire, North of England, Scotland, and Ireland.....	2 0 P. M.	2 30 P. M.
Upton, Oxtan, and Tranmere.....	5 30 P. M.	Chester, Eastham, and New Ferry	5 15 P. M.	5 30 P. M.
		Chester and North Wales.....	8 0 P. M.	8 30 P. M.
		London, South and West of Eng- land, Midland Counties, Scot- land, and North of England.....	8 0 P. M.	8 30 P. M.

A Town Hall, with every convenience requisite for the management of the affairs of the township, is intended to be built in Hamilton Square, in which a large house is at present occupied by the Commissioners and their clerks. A Bridewell will also be erected towards Cleveland Street. When these are completed the police business of the township, which at present is transacted at the old Town Hall, will be removed, and the old building taken down.

## TRADE AND MANUFACTURES.

Birkenhead cannot be considered as a Manufacturing town; and it is very doubtful whether any of the numerous intimations that have lately been made of the intended introduction of Cotton Mills and Sugar Refineries will be accomplished for years.

An extensive Boiler Manufactory was established in Birkenhead so early as 1824, by the late Mr. Laird, to which was afterwards added an Iron Ship-building Yard. This branch of business has since been carried on to a great extent by Mr. John Laird, by whom iron vessels of every description have been built and dispatched to every part of the globe. The first iron steam-boat built here was the *John Randolph*, for America. She has been succeeded by many others; among which are several for Government, and many for the East India Company; one of the latter was the *Nemesis*, the celebrated steam-ship which, under the command of Capt. Hall, was so frequently mentioned in the late Chinese war.

The vessels that went on the expedition to the Niger, under the direction of Mr. Macgregor Laird, in 1832, were launched here, as were those which composed the last unfortunate expedition to that river. A first-rate steam Frigate of 1500 tons, and 560 horse power, has just been launched, called the *Birkenhead*; the Lords of the Admiralty having been pleased to order that, in compliment to the place of her construction, she should bear this name instead of that of "Vulcan," as originally intended. She is about the sixtieth vessel that has been launched, or rather built here, for many of them were in the first instance, sent out in detached pieces, a plan which is now nearly abandoned.

A Timber Ship-building Yard has also been established for some years in Birkenhead; and many excellent vessels have been launched at the northern part of the town; but the Dock Works, now in progress, will most probably cause some alteration, as the land will be required for other purposes. There is, however, ample space for ship-building yards near the head of the Pool, where, by the plan, it will be perceived graving docks are to be made. A slip, erected on Morton's patent, in 1818, will also have to be removed. By the action of its machinery the largest vessel, placed on a frame, or cradle, may be drawn out of the water, thus affording the carpenters every facility for their labours.

There are some extensive Breweries in Birkenhead, from which a large portion of the Hundred is supplied. One recently established on a large scale has, in addition to the home trade, commenced furnishing for exportation, and the "Birkenhead Anchor Brewery Beer" bids fair to be a considerable article of consumption abroad.

The other manufactories are confined to Steam Mills, Paint Works, and Candle Makers; the produce of these works is very limited, and not sufficient to supply the demand of the town.\* A vast number of bricks—upwards of eighty-five millions—have been made in Birkenhead during the present year (1845;) at one period nearly two thousand men were employed in the fields and at the kilns.

The branch of the North and South Wales Banking Company opened here in 1845, has been of much convenience to the trading part of the community, and its progress is understood to have fully answered the expectation of the directors. There is no other banking establishment in Birkenhead.

Most of the large Fire and Life Insurance offices have agencies in this town, which is supplied with several fire engines, and from the elevated reservoirs of the Water Company, an efficient supply of water can be immediately obtained.

Birkenhead has some little import trade. Coals, slate, lime, and iron castings, are occasionally imported coastwise, and a few cargoes of timber are annually brought from America. Several Prussian vessels have discharged here during the last autumn. Vessels and their cargoes, if moored at a quay or landing place on the Cheshire shore, are exempt from the duties otherwise imposed by the Liverpool Dock Trustees, on all vessels arriving in the Port of Liverpool, which extends from Crosby in Lancashire to the Red or Calder stones, near Hoylake.

In 1843 a small Directory, the first ever printed in Wirral, was published in Birkenhead, to which place its contents were confined; a second followed in the next year on an enlarged scale, but the rapidly increasing population, occasioning daily alterations, is found to be unfavourable to these productions. During the last year several minor works have issued from the Birkenhead press, the principal of which is a monthly periodical of great interest to the religious community, entitled *The Prophetic*

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\* Several manufactories, copper and chemical works, lately described by Chambers, and copied into other periodicals, as in Birkenhead, are in Wallasey, on the opposite side of the Pool. They are extensive, and conveniently situated on the margin of the river.

*Herald*, under the efficient editorship of the Rev. Joseph Baylee, Incumbent of Holy Trinity, assisted by eminent students of prophetic theology, which has already obtained considerable circulation. And may it here be allowed to the compiler of these pages, now speaking for the first time in *propria persona*, to add, that they have been printed in Birkenhead, at the establishment of Mr. James Law, who is now making arrangements for the publication of a newspaper to be called *The Birkenhead Herald*. This will appear weekly, and looking to the population of the neighbouring townships, the district through which it may be naturally expected to circulate, the number of advertizers and readers ought to be such as to ensure its success.

A project has been suggested for the manufacturing of Salt here, by which it is proposed to raise brine at the inexhaustible springs in the salt districts of Cheshire, and convey it along the line of railway to Birkenhead, where coals are now lower than in the Witches. The saving of expense in the carriage of coals, so largely used in making salt, the avoiding of the present freight from the works, and the heavy charges for dues on the river Weaver, would, it is calculated, amply repay the investment, even should no reduction take place in the price of coals in Birkenhead,—a circumstance which may be expected on the opening of the North Wales Mineral Railway, which is to communicate with the Chester and Birkenhead Line.

#### HOTELS, ETC.

Birkenhead is well supplied with Hotels, Inns, and Boarding Houses, several of the former being of a superior description, replete with every convenience that comfort can require or luxury suggest.

The Birkenhead Royal Mail Ferry, opened in 1819, is situated at the southern part of the town, and has a very excellent landing slip, which is shorter than those at the other ferries on the river, in consequence of the greater depth of water close to the shore at this point. The Hotel, which is extremely commodious and well-conducted, stands in a delightful yet almost isolated site, at the north east angle of Tranmere Bay, on the most commanding situation the margin of the Mersey affords. It contains many private sitting-rooms, and is furnished with every description of baths. There are extensive pleasure grounds immediately adjoining the house, surrounded with numerous alcoves, descending to the water's edge, where they are bounded with a belt

of old oak trees, which form the most striking object on the southern promontory of Birkenhead, and being surmounted by the Gothic spire of the Church, give a very picturesque appearance to the Hotel and grounds. In front is a fine elevated garden gradually sloping to Tranmere Pool, and immediately adjacent to it, an excellent Bowling Green and Billiard Rooms, both affording a charming prospect of the entire southern basin of the river, which from hence appears as an inland lake: The Stabling is very extensive; many Stage Coaches having run from this house previously to the formation of the Chester and Birkenhead Railway, and the Ferry is yet the favourite place of embarkation for carriages of every description.

The Ferry and Hotel were purchased in 1839 by the Corporation of Liverpool, from whom they are rented by Messrs. Edward G. & S. Willoughby, who had previously occupied the premises for many years. Soon after their purchase, a new pier running northward, and parallel to the river, was erected by the Corporation. This has been found of great utility in landing and embarking goods and passengers at high tides; and notice has been given of further improvements, the strand of the river having been bought from the Commissioners of Woods and Forests for that purpose. At present, Steam-packets ply from this Ferry to Liverpool every half-hour, exclusive of occasional packets for luggage, and cattle.

The well-known establishment called the Monks' Ferry Hotel, situated within a few yards of the Mersey, was erected in 1838 by a Company then formed for the purpose of establishing a rival Ferry across the river. Although it is a very large and excellent house, furnished with every convenience for the landing and embarkation of passengers and carriages at all times, considerable additions are intended to be made by the present owners, the Commissioners of Birkenhead, in consequence of the increased traffic anticipated from the many projected railways which are intended to communicate with the Chester and Birkenhead line. The terminus of this Railway is at this house, the grounds of which reach to the water's edge, affording an interesting prospect of the entire town of Liverpool, the river, and its numerous shipping. The Hotel is conducted by Mr. Hilliar; and from the Ferry not being inconvenienced by merchandize, the house is much frequented by the aristocracy and superior class of travellers, who invariably express themselves pleased with its management.

The Woodside Royal Mail Ferry Hotel—attached to the oldest Ferry across the Mersey, that of ancient Birkenhead, now generally called Woodside—is, under the

management of Mr. Gough, one of the best conducted establishments on the banks of the river. It stands on the site of the old boat-house, which was removed in 1833, when the present Hotel was built. This contains every accommodation for families and occasional visitors, having a large coffee-room, twelve sitting rooms, and numerous suites of private chambers. The Stabling department is on a very extensive scale, affording room for upwards of one hundred horses and carriages. The House and pleasure grounds in front command very interesting views of Liverpool, and the numerous vessels, and steam and pleasure boats, constantly in motion.

The Steam-packets of the Commissioners of Birkenhead ply from this Ferry every half-hour, from five in the morning until midnight, with intervening packets for the conveyance of merchandize and luggage, which also take passengers, whereby a conveyance across the river may be found almost every quarter of an hour: it has been proposed to run the boats throughout the night.

Connected with this Hotel by a tunnel, is an otherwise detached house for the accommodation of the farmers and others, who may prefer a smaller establishment.

Immediately adjacent to this, stands the Adelphi Hotel, the pleasure grounds of which extend to the water's edge. It is a well conducted establishment, furnished with baths, billiard rooms, and every accommodation for the numerous parties by whom it is visited. In 1844, it was purchased, together with the Woodside Hotel and the adjoining property, from Mr. Price, by Mr. William Jackson, from whom it is rented by Mr. Gleave the present occupier.

These are the only Hotels situated on the margin of the river; there are many others highly respectable, where strangers will find every attention and comfort. Private lodging houses are abundant, and may be found in the best and most genteel parts of the town.

#### POPULATION. LOCAL GOVERNMENT. TAXATION.

The population of Birkenhead has so rapidly increased within the last few years, that a reference to the official returns is nearly useless. The census may indeed correctly state the numbers resident at each of the decennial periods, at which it was taken;\* and also that, on the sixth day of June, in the year 1841, there were 1270

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\* The population in 1801, was 110; in 1811, 105; in 1821, 200; in 1831, 2569.

houses in Birkenhead, occupied by 8223 persons; of whom only 2752 were natives of Cheshire. But these figures give a very inadequate view of the present population, which at least trebles the number of 1841. It will be observed, that the average of persons to each house was then nearly as six and a half to one, although in most parts of the County it does not exceed five. The great demand for labourers in Birkenhead within the last two years, and more especially since the commencement of the heavy Dock Works, has filled the smaller description of houses; so that the average number now amounts to nearer eight than seven. In addition to this, a new system of building has latterly been introduced, and that which is in many instances called, and even rated as, a house, is in fact, eight; each of them containing two or three rooms, according to the system adopted in Edinburgh, and each frequently occupied by as many families. The number of inhabited houses, according to the Township Rate Book, of March 1845, (that being the last,) was 2798; since which, upwards of 500 more have been completed and occupied. Taking the total number of houses to be 3300, and that each is inhabited by eight persons, the population would amount to 26,000; a number which very slightly exceeds the result of personal inquiries, made for other purposes, within the last few months.

In a short time this number will be greatly increased, as there are now (December, 1845,) about 300 houses in course of erection, exclusive of 328 by the Warehouse Company, and many hundred persons return to Liverpool at the termination of their daily work, for want of residences in Birkenhead.

The local affairs of Birkenhead are under the direction of twenty-four Commissioners, appointed under the provisions of an Act passed in 1838. Five years previously, the town may be said to have been incorporated, by an Act appointing sixty-four Commissioners; but this number being found very inconvenient, and the exigencies of the town requiring more funds, an alteration was made in the constitution of the Board, which was then authorized to borrow further sums of money. Of the present number, twenty-one are elected by householders, rated at £10 per annum or upwards, and the other three by the Town Council of Liverpool; but as the Corporation has disposed of nearly all its property in Birkenhead, notice has been given of clauses that will be introduced into the next Birkenhead Improvement Act to dispense with this nomination.

The Commissioners have divided themselves into Sub-Committees for the manage-



ment of the several affairs of the Finances, Market, Watching and Lighting, the Road, and the Ferry. The Health Committee was especially appointed by Act of Parliament. These report monthly to the General Board, whose accounts are annually made out for the inspection of the public. The following abstract of their affairs is taken from the accounts printed by the Commissioners for several years; but as, for some unexplained reasons, they have not published any statement for the year 1844-5, the latter part is abbreviated from their audited account as settled at their general annual meeting in May, 1845.

The first annual account printed by the present Commissioners was issued soon after their appointment in 1838, from which it appears that in the twelve months ending 19th April in that year, their total expenditure was £957 4s. They were then indebted to their bankers £402 2s. 6d.; they had also borrowed on their bonds £5,166 12s. 5d., and their property consisted of the market, and an adjacent piece of land. The township was then rated at one shilling and sixpence in the pound,\* on the valuation, which was then fixed, and has since continued, at 18s. 6d. in the pound on the actual value of the property. In that year the rental was £25,640.

The "Statement of the affairs of the Commissioners" for the year ending 1842, (at which time the town was rated at £42,620, and the improvement rate was ninepence in the pound,) closes with a balance to the credit of the township of £4,033 16s. 1½d, assuming the value of the Market at £11,145 18s. 7½d.

In 1842 the Act was obtained to purchase the Woodside Ferry, a measure from which the greatest advantages were expected to result, and powers were given to borrow £150,000. Accordingly the accounts of the Commissioners for the year ending 22nd April, 1843, show the payment, for the Ferry, of £32,181 1s. 2d., £34,500 having been borrowed on bond for that purpose. The total expenditure in the year was £43,232 18s. 6d., in which is included, lighting and watching, £1,366 2s. 2d.; highways, £2,630 15s. 10d.; and parliamentary expenses, £1,396 9s. 10d. In addition to the "summary" of their accounts, from which the above is extracted, a statement was at the same time issued, of which the following is an exact copy :

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\* Two-thirds of this rate was to defray the expenses of obtaining the Act.

*"GENERAL STATEMENT of the Affairs of the Commissioners of BIRKENHEAD."*

DR.		CR.	
To General Bond Account.....	£43,150 0 0	By Arrears of Rates due.....	£ 3,980 11 8½
To F. R. Price, for Fee-simple of Woodside Ferry.....	44,000 0 0	By Woodside Ferry.....	76,014 7 8
To Amount due Bankers.....	3,080 14 2	By Market.....	11,145 18 7½
To ditto to Sundries.....	336 3 8½	By Property purchased for Houses and Land.....	2,572 5 0
	90,566 17 5½	By Broken Stones.....	553 16 3
		By Cash in hand.....	350 18 9½
Balance to credit of Township	4,051 0 6½		
	£94,617 18 0		£94,617 18 0"

The township was then valued at £46,107, and the Improvement Rate was ninepence in the pound.

The Acts of Parliament for the formation of a Park, and establishing a Cemetery, which received the Royal Assent 11th April, 1843, authorized the borrowing of £250,000, and made a material alteration in the finances of the township, which for the year 1843-44 was rated at sevenpence in the pound on £59,645 10s. The Commissioners immediately availed themselves of the power to borrow, and made considerable purchases of land. In the following year they published "a summary" of their accounts and a general statement of their affairs, both made up to the 22nd, April, 1844. By the former their expenditure in the year was £65,999 6s. 4½d. and their receipts £65,826 10s. 6½d. including £56,800 on loan, and £6,132 8s. 2d. from Woodside Ferry, being "balance of receipts over expenditure." The General Statement is very short, being in the following words—(the usual Schedule of the property being now for the first time omitted.)

"LIABILITIES."		PROPERTY.	
To Amount of General Bonds	£208,367 15 0	By value of Commissioners' Property .....	£337,658 4 4½
Ditto due to Bankers .....	1,537 7 11	Amount of Rates uncollected	4,651 16 8½
Ditto „ Sundries on acct. of Improvement Rate	394 14 7	Cash in Treasurer's hands	178 2 11
Ditto „ Account Watching	24 7 11		
	£210,324 5 5		
To balance credit of Township	132,163 18 6½		
	£342,488 3 11½		£342,488 3 11½

Audited 28th May, 1844."

By these figures it would appear that the value of the township, over and above the bonds of the Commissioners, was £132,163 18s. 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., and that its property was actually worth £337,658 4s. 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. As the accounts were audited by no less than six gentlemen, it may be presumed they are correct, although unquestionably the balance twelve months before was only £4,051 0s. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and subsequently by the accounts only £65,999 6s. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. had been expended, of which no less than £5,643 4s. 3d. was for interest, and £901 0s. 9d. for salaries and incidental charges. There may have been money borrowed on bond, as well as on loan, or bonds may have been given for the land; but it would have been more correct to have stated the fact, which on the face of the account is rather inexplicable.

At the same special meeting of the Commissioners, from which the last document was issued, "an Account of all Monies [*sic orig.*] received for the purposes of Woodside Ferry under the Act" was presented, and approved. From this, the only statement printed by them, the receipts appear to have been £15,589 18s. 4d. and the payments £9,457 10s. 2d., the difference between which was afterwards paid to the Commissioners; who, on the other hand, paid £7,148 6s. 11d. for one Steam-packet and part of another. The payment does not include interest or rent, and the balance of £6,132 8s. 2d. would have been greatly reduced if a proper charge had been made, under either head, for the outlay of about £80,000. Subsequently, another, the last Ferry Account, extending to the 22nd April, 1845, has been made out, but not printed. It exhibits a receipt of £21,305 1s., and the expenditure being only £18,517 5s. 9d. there is nominally a profit of £2,787 15s. 3d.; but in this case, as in the other, no item for either rent or interest appears; and a reference to the accounts of the Commissioners for the same period shows that a further sum of £3,280 has been paid by them for a "part of a new packet."

Unquestionably great advantage has resulted to the town from the management of the Ferry and Packets since they became the property of the public. The capacities of the boats, the frequency of their dispatch, and the general regularity by which the entire establishment is conducted, can hardly be exceeded; but the expectations of those who anticipated that its profits would supersede the necessity of an improvement rate, have not been fulfilled, the present rate (upon £73,048) being the same as in the preceding year, with every probability of a further advance.

The following is the Summary of the Accounts of the Township, for the year ending 22nd April, 1845.

To Cash in hand.....	£ 178 2 11	By Paid for Highways.....	£6,209 16 6
To Cash received for Land sold	2,773 10 0	„ Lighting and Watching	2,282 12 2
To Improvement Rate.....	1,536 7 4½	„ Market and Town Hall	388 14 5
To Lighting and Watching Rate	1,954 5 5½	„ Making new Streets ...	6,317 6 9
To Cash received for Market		„ General Property* .....	71,103 19 11½
Rents, &c.....	379 19 10	„ Breaking Stones .....	1,090 7 7
To Cash received on Loans.....	88,909 9 0	„ Salaries, general charges,	
		&c. ....	2,031 5 7½
		„ Interest.....	6,216 1 9½
		By Balance of Cash in hand ...	91 9 9½
	<hr/> <hr/>		<hr/> <hr/>
	£95,731 14 7		£95,731 14 7

Appended to this account is a short statement of the Liabilities of the Commissioners, viz:—"To amount of General Bonds, £297,367 15s.; due on account of Monks' Ferry, £14,286 11s. 8d.; due Bankers, £824 9s. 8d.; and to Sundries, £724 7s. 8d.;" making, as certified by the Chairman of the Finance Committee, a total of £313,203 4s.

Large as this sum appears, the greatly increased value of the property of the town will more than cover it; while the Bondholders have the additional security of the rates and tolls, as also the profits which may be expected from the Ferry. No detailed statement has latterly been furnished of this property; the delay appears to have originated in the many forms now required previously to publication, which are, in a great measure, dispensed with on the opposite shores of the Mersey.

The County Magistrates hold a weekly Sessions in Birkenhead, but there are cases which require the attendance of some of the Justices daily; and the rapidly increasing population of the town loudly calls for a resident stipendiary magistrate, whose undivided attention might be devoted to the various duties of that office. It is expected that when the new Town Hall and Prisons are built, the Magistrates will hold their general Sessions, for the western division of Wirral, in Birkenhead.

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\* Including £14,864 paid for Monks' Ferry and Land; £3,280 for part of a packet; £32,240 paid on account of forming the new Park; and £3,818 on account of the Slaughter-houses.

The Birkenhead Police force is placed under the control of a Watch and Lighting Committee. It consists of one General Superintendent, four Inspectors, and forty Men; a number which, looking to the population of the town, and the vast masses of the lowest class of labourers which it contains, seems insufficient. The same Committee have also the management of the Hackney Coaches and Cars. These may be always obtained at reasonable fares, which being settled by the Commissioners prevent imposition. None are allowed to ply without a license issued by them, and on a breach of their bye-laws, it may be cancelled.

The head-quarters of the Special High Constable of Wirral—an officer appointed under the Cheshire Constabulary Act—is held at Birkenhead; the force under his command consists of fifteen men.

The business of the Overseers of the Poor of Birkenhead is conducted by a stipendiary assistant. The town is included in the "Wirral Union," which comprehends fifty-six townships, and to which Birkenhead returns two Guardians. The Office of the Union is held at Clatterbridge, in Poulton-cum-Spittle, where the District Workhouse is situated. During the last year, the number of paupers admitted into the house was 133, and upwards of 2000 casual or out-door poor received relief; yet the poor rate was only sixpence in the pound, amounting to £1481 1s. 6d.; a fact which speaks favourably for the management of the Officers, especially when it is considered that the claims for casual assistance are greatly increased by the numerous accidents incidental to the labours of the major part of the working men in Birkenhead; and, also, that numbers have daily to be relieved and passed to Liverpool.

The recovery of small debts having long been a tedious process, a source of much injury to the respectable tradesman, and frequently one of great hardship to the lower classes, notice has been given of an intended application to Parliament, for powers to constitute a Court of Requests, to be held at Birkenhead, for the greater portion of the lower division of Wirral. This measure would be so highly satisfactory to all who witness the scenes of iniquity and oppression weekly exhibited in the Police court, that it is at once a matter of surprise and of regret, that the originators of the bill should have neglected to include several of the adjacent townships in their notice. It is difficult to conceive any adequate reason for the omission, which will probably have the effect of causing the project to be withdrawn, as similar proposals, emanating from the same quarter, on former occasions have been.

## Churches and Schools.

A description of the public edifices, devoted to the purposes of Religion and Education, should have occupied an earlier position in this volume, had it not been necessarily delayed in consequence of the plans of some projected Churches not having been finally agreed upon. To this explanation it is pleasing to be enabled to add, that these have now been arranged; and in the course of the next year, the town will be gratified by the completion of four, if not five, additional Churches; to all of which large Schools will be attached. This practical recognition of the great duty of promoting Church extension and Scriptural education, is the more thankfully to be acknowledged, as Birkenhead, from the great influx of the lower classes within the last few years, presents an enlarged field for the labours of the Christian and the philanthropist.

After the dissolution, the Priory, with the other estates of the Convent, having been granted to Ralph Worsley, a license was granted for the performance of Divine Service in the Chapter-house, which was occasionally used as a Chapel, and the nomination of a lecturer or curate was vested in him, and his successors. They generally allowed a small stipend to the rector of some of the adjacent parishes for this duty, and as the Rector of Bidston appears most frequently to have officiated, it is probable the almost general belief, that the township was included in that parish, may have originated from this circumstance. Birkenhead is, however, extra-parochial, and not subject to Church rates, Easter dues, or to any claims of an Ecclesiastical character.

### ST. MARY'S CHURCH.

When the first extensive changes of property were made in Birkenhead in 1817, Mr. Price engaged with Messrs. Hetherington and Grindrod of Liverpool, that he would erect a Church, at his own expense, on the elevated ground immediately adjacent to the ruins of the ancient Priory; which were then surrounded with fields, having

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\* Even in Ecton's Thesaurus, as revised by Browne Willis in 1763, Birkenhead and Moreton, have both the same short but erroneous description of "Chapel to Bidston (not certified) *Destructa*;" and to the present day Birkenhead is almost invariably, in all Excise documents, stated to be in the parish of Bidston.

only a footpath from the old Chapel to the Chester Road. Accordingly, on the 19th July, 1819, the foundation stone of a Church, dedicated to St. Mary, was laid with much ceremony by the Right Hon. Lord Kenyon.

The building, in the first instance, comprehended only a body and chancel, with a north and south porch, having also a tower and spire; but the increased population of the township having rendered further accommodation requisite, two transepts, each 42 feet by 36, have subsequently been added. These are evidently not the production of the eminent architect and antiquary, Thomas Rickman, by whom the original designs for the Church—the first he built—were furnished.

The Church is 90 feet long, by 54 feet in breadth; and, with the galleries in the west end, and the transepts, has seat-room for about 1300 persons. It is of the Decorated English style of Architecture,\* which prevailed during the fourteenth century. The windows are three-light, except those in the semi-octagonal chancel, which are two-light, and filled in with stained glass of a good character. The various parts of the Church throughout are in pretty good keeping, except the flat ceiling, which, divided by ribs into various figures, is altogether inconsistent with ecclesiastical architecture, and, doubtless, would have been rejected by the architect at a later period of his life.

The transepts, which also have flat plaister ceilings, do not harmonize with the other parts of the edifice; their north and south windows, in particular, are of a much later period than the others. Internally the Church presents little worthy of notice; and the present arrangement of the pulpit and reading desk, with respect to position, does not tend to improve the general effect.

Externally the Church is principally distinguished by an elegant tower and spire, together about 130 feet in height; the latter is a very conspicuous object from every part of the surrounding neighbourhood. The tower contains a peal of six fine-toned bells, and is furnished with a clock, placed much too low for general utility. The Church-yard is extensive, and includes the ancient burial ground of the Priory, in which are several tombs of an old date, but there are no monuments of interest in either. An old grave-stone discovered in 1818, and which from the description

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\* This style continued for little more than seventy years, during the reign of the second and third Edwards, by both of whom, it will be remembered, charters were granted to the Priory, (*see ante*, 309, 310,) a circumstance which would not have escaped Mr. Rickman's notice.

appears to have covered the remains of one of the ancient priors, Thomas Rayneford, has been worked into the wall near the door of the old Chapter House, wherein, nearly five centuries since, he presided over the Councils of the Priory.

The Church has latterly become, by purchase, the property of William Jackson, Esq. whose name is so intimately connected with Birkenhead. The Rev. Andrew Knox is, and for the last seventeen years has been, the Incumbent.

In connection with this Church are Day and Sunday Schools, the first established in Birkenhead. "The experience of sixteen years renders it unnecessary to dwell much on the value of these Schools, which were the first established in Birkenhead for the poor; thousands of young persons have passed through them; many now grown up have been instructed in them, and taught to value the Bible, which is the birthright of every man. The rapid increase of population brings a weekly accession of scholars. The numbers on the books at the close of the year were, boys, 110; girls, 120;" (*vide Report*, 1845,) and, in addition, there are 134 children in the Infants' School. The expenses during the last year were £170 0s. 10d., towards which the parents of the children contributed £27 11s. 5d., the remainder was derived from subscriptions and a collection after an annual sermon.

Arrangements are making for the removal of these Schools to a more eligible situation near the Church, where a very extensive building will be erected, the particulars of which are not yet finally settled.

#### THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

Which is situated in Price Street, was erected in 1837. This edifice is of white stone, 102 feet in length, and 56 in breadth, and is remarkable in several respects as regards design and architectural ornament.

The style is Norman, but considerably modified, and divested of that stiffness and heaviness by which many of the old Saxon buildings are characterized; and there is a lightness about its proportions, which closely approximates to the early English. The principal entrance is by a deeply recessed ornamental Saxon door-way, having two windows above, supported by small arches, crowned with grotesque heads, exhibiting singularly distorted countenances. Strange looking figures, abounding in every part, constitute the most prominent feature about the building. The architect has, however,



evinced much skill, in the arrangement and combination of the various parts of the work, whereby an appearance of elegance has been attained.

The tower, which rises to the height of 88 feet, is highly embellished with mouldings and frieze work. The belfry is separated into divisions by dwarf windows, from the corners of which, wild looking figures, similar to those already named, present themselves. Above, is a plain ballustrade of Saxon columns on arches, figured with representations of angels, and finished with scroll pedestals for the support of ornamental pinnacles, which, however, have not yet been fixed.

The interior, which will accommodate 1000 persons, is divided into three parts, by two rows of quadrangular fluted pillars, of extremely delicate proportions; from these, at the height of 34 feet, spring several arches, supporting the roof of the nave, which is carried higher than the ceiling of the gallery. There is some very good carved work in front of the gallery, and the intersection of the arches have carved bosses. Although the construction is something peculiar and original, it has by no means a disagreeable effect, especially if examined from the gallery at the west end of the Church; but the pulpit, which, with the reading-desk, forms an elegant piece of workmanship, is most inconveniently placed, almost concealing the chancel—if a part of the body of the Church, reduced on one side by a vestry, and on the other by a sort of sacristy, or store-room, deserve the name—from the view of the congregation.

The great east window is large, and has some good stained glass; the other windows, which are of an elongated form, are appropriately figured, and in keeping with the other parts of the church; the plans and designs for the whole were furnished by the late firm of Cunningham & Holme of Liverpool, under whose superintendence the sacred edifice was built.

The incumbent of this Church is the Rev. Joseph Baylee, who witnessing the want of a Church where the forms of the Establishment could be used in Welsh, applied himself to the study of that language; and now, in addition to the usual morning and evening duties, performs Divine Service twice every Sunday in the Welsh tongue, for the benefit of the natives of the Principality. In addition to five services on each Sunday, there are two week-day services at this Church; where all the Fast and Festivals are also solemnized according to the Liturgy.

There are also two curates attached to Trinity Church; and in connection with it are large and commodious Schools, at which 120 boys and 130 girls are educated; and





C. HITCHCOCK LITH. N.Y.

A. DRAYTON LITH. LIVERPOOL

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH.  
GRANGE LANE, BIRKENHEAD.

Charles Drea  
Architect

also an Infant School for 90 children. The expenses of the Schools are almost entirely defrayed by voluntary contributions, the payments by the parents of the children being limited and uncertain.

#### ST. JOHN'S CHURCH.

The Churches already described, being found totally inadequate to afford accommodation to the rapidly increasing population of the Township, the foundation stone of a new Church was laid on the 17th June, 1845, in Grange Lane, by John Somerville Jackson, Esq., who is the principal promoter of the edifice, which is now erecting, and will be endowed, at the joint expense of himself, his brother William Jackson, Esq., and Joseph Mallaby, Esq.

The Church is intended to be dedicated to St. John. It is building by the Messrs. Walker, from designs by Mr. Charles Reed of Birkenhead, to whom acknowledgements are due, for the following description of the same.

The architecture is that of the latter period of the early English style, about the date of the middle of the reign of Henry III. known by the graceful lancet arch, the tapering spire, and the general tendency to the Perpendicular in all parts of the composition. The tower and spire will be the highest in Birkenhead, or for some miles around, being no less than 150 feet from the base to the summit. This extreme height, which will add to the gracefulness of the whole, and render it a conspicuous landmark, is in accordance with the style of architecture at that period, and with the present prevailing taste for the revival of the antique. The Church will consist of a nave and side aisles, and, including the chancel, will be 109 feet long, and 40 wide. The roof of the nave will be open, shewing all the timbers, which are of stained oak. The roof of the aisles will also show the rafters, which are likewise of stained oak, and plaistered between. Each of the capitals of the pillars, between the nave and the side aisles, will have a different carving, whereby variety of detail will be added to the general effect. A handsome arch, supported by clustered columns, divides the nave from the chancel. The organ will be placed in the eastern transept, the boys, who form the choir, occupying the opposite. The font, of Talacre stone, will be placed in front of the chancel—the pulpit being on one side, and the reading desk on the other. The exterior is of red stone, scutched, having five entrances;

one on each side, through very neat porches, one in each transept, and one in the tower. In accordance with ancient examples, there will be galleries only at the end opposite the chancel, and in the transepts.

The pews being of a much more open kind than is usually seen in modern Churches, will somewhat resemble the ancient stall. The end of each will have a plain carved finial, and the door will not be more than two-thirds the usual height. Thus the peculiarity of the pews, and the absence of galleries over the side aisles, will give to the building an air of variety, and yet of antique effect, which will greatly improve the general appearance.

Large and imposing as is the sacred edifice, the entire expense is estimated at only £3,900, although it will afford accommodation for about one thousand persons. Above one-third of the sittings are intended to be free; and that the poor may not have their feelings wounded in the House of God by offensive distinctions, no forms will be used as free seats,—the part reserved for them will be furnished with pews of exactly the same construction as the rest.

One peculiarity in this Church is that it stands due north and south, instead of east and west. This, though rare, and opposed to the general notions of correct Church architecture, is not entirely without precedent among our forefathers, who were ever careful to consult convenience first. This frequently produced new ideas, whence have originated many of their greatest beauties; as buttresses, originally for strength, afterwards, by judicious decorations, became the greatest ornaments; and pinnacles, in the first instance intended to give weight, and to resist the lateral pressure of flying buttresses, or arches, were subsequently decorated to the utmost possible extent, and so on throughout many of the most beautiful details of Gothic architecture.

Considerable inconvenience was experienced, from the ground dropping 14 feet in every 100 yards; but by lowering the earth at one end of the Church, and raising it at the other, the difficulty has in a great measure been overcome; yet the low situation in which the edifice is placed greatly detracts from its appearance.

In connection with St. John's Church are elegant and spacious Schools, the expense of the erection of which was defrayed by the contributions of a few individuals, aided by grants from the two great public societies. The lower story, which is to form in future an Infant School, is fitted up, and will be used, as a temporary Church, until the new edifice is completed. It is a fine room, 64 feet long by 24 feet wide, and was opened for Divine Service on the 14th September, 1845.





St. George's Church,  
Birmingham.  
W. H. Long, Architect.

The Rev. Charles James Hamilton, to whom the Incumbency of the Church has been presented, officiates at the Schools, which are estimated to accommodate four hundred and fifty children.

ST. ANNE'S CHURCH.

This elegant building, which is situated in St. Anne's Street, is now in the course of erection by the Messrs. Walker, at the sole expense of William Potter, Esq. from designs by William Cole, Esq., of Birkenhead.

The Church consists of a tower, nave and chancel, with two transepts. The line of the adjacent streets prevented the edifice being placed *due* East and West, a circumstance which is the less to be regretted, as the front view of the tower and lofty spire, and also that of the east end, (so called,) are thus opened directly to the neighbouring streets. The style of architecture which prevailed in the reign of Edward the First, and which closely approximates to the Decorative, has been selected for the exterior, with which the interior corresponds. The roof, which is partially open, is particularly deserving of notice. Curved braces, handsomely moulded, rising from stone corbels, support the queen posts; from these again spring others, of a similar form, which rise to the collar beam, where the roof ceases to be exposed, and a level ceiling, handsomely pannelled in timber, extends the entire length of the nave: a union of the two forms of roofing has thus been effected, which presents an appearance as pleasing as it is novel. There are three entrances; the principal at the west end, through a lofty arch; the others at the north, and the south sides. The material used is a remarkably fine red sandstone from the Claughton quarries.

The length of the Church, including the chancel, is 122 feet; and the extreme breadth, including the transepts, which are each 30 feet, is 105 feet.

It will afford accommodation for 1200 persons,—for 400 of whom free sittings are provided. The greatest attention throughout has been evinced, in endeavouring to combine the strictest adherence to ancient character, with a due provision for modern requirements.

Immediately adjacent to, and in connexion with this Church, stands St. Anne's Free School, an extensive fabric recently built by Mr. Potter for the education of 500 children, according to the system of the National Society. It is built in the Elizabethan



style of architecture, of red brick, having the quoins, window copings, dressings, &c. of white stone. The lower room has been fitted up, and will continue to be used as a temporary Church, until the completion of St. Anne's, the incumbency of which has been presented to the Rev. Edward R. Jones.

NEW CHURCH (AT CLAUGHTON.\*)

This Church is placed on the acclivity of the hill leading to Oxton, on an angular piece of land, at the junction of several principal roads, near the Claughton Firs quarries, with the red sandstone from which it is built. It is erected on the rock, having a fall towards the East, in the length of the Church and chancel, of twelve feet, which has enabled the architect to obtain a crypt under the chancel and transepts, which is appropriated to School Rooms. The land on which it stands was given by, and the Church built and endowed at the expense of, William Potter, Esq., from designs of Robert William Jearrad, Esq., architect, of London.

The plan of the Church is cruciform, having on the east a deep seated chancel, and on the west a tower, terminated by a lofty octangular broached spire, in extreme height 168 feet 6 inches. The church, tower and chancel are 153 feet 3 inches in length; the width of the transepts, exclusive of the buttresses, is 91 feet. The Church contains 1209 spacious sittings, according with the regulations of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; 414 of these are free, and to remain unappropriated for ever. The pews and free sittings have no distinctive difference in appearance, excepting that the former, which in no instance exceed three feet in height, have very low doors.

The architecture is of the date of the latter part of the reign of Edward the First. The principal entrance is by a spacious lancet-headed doorway in the tower, having clustered columns, plain moulded capitals and bases, deep seated moulded archivolt, ogee drip stones with carved crockets, and foliated finials. Entrances and staircases, projecting from the eastern side, lead into the transepts.

In the nave the windows are lancet-headed. The transepts have long narrow three-light windows finished with richly carved drip stones. The tower has pedimented

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\* This will most probably be called CHRIST'S CHURCH, as that denomination will be given either to this or to another new Church in the immediate vicinity, intended to be erected by Mr. Potter.

lancet-head spire light windows, on four of its sides at the base, with long cross-headed perforations in the upper part.

The interior of the Church is peculiarly deserving of attention, the roof having a very imposing effect. It is of timber, high-pitched and without tie-beams, assimilating, in outline, with that of Westminster Hall. All the timbers, which are visible in the moulded ridge, are of one continuous level through the nave, transepts, and chancel, and lighted by circular windows, moulded with trefoil tracery, in the upper part of the gables. There are thirteen pairs of gothic arched, moulded and trussed principals, which stand on moulded stone corbels, and divide the roof into as many compartments, pannelled by moulded purlins. Above the windows are wrought and moulded plates, resting upon horizontal beams, which with the arches of the principals connecting them together, form a perfect and complete bracket, lessening in operation the span of the roof, and converting its entire carpentry into one complete mass vertically seated, without the possibility of lateral thrust or pressure. The purlins which are massive, are moulded and framed into the principals, not four feet apart; on these, inclining parallel with the direction of the vallies of the roof, are laid strong wrought match-planed and beaded boarding, to receive the slating.

There is a gallery in the tower having the front trussed and pannelled, moulded with trefoil heads, spandrills, and capped.

The Communion or Altar screen is richly carved with groined niches, trefoil, and canopied pedimented heads, with carved crockets and finials. The railing is very massive. The reading desk and clerk's desk are on the south side of the chancel on the level of the communion floor; they have turned columns, plain moulded capitals and bases. The pulpit, which stands on the north side of the chancel upon an octangular pedestal, is ascended by a carved oak staircase from the floor of the chancel, and has carved canopies, pendants, and quatrefoil pannels in compartments. The organ and choir are in the north transept gallery, placed so as not to obstruct the window. The pulpit, desk, and rails, are all of solid massive oak. The principals and other timber in the pews, gallery fronts, and all the woodwork in the roof, is grained and varnished in imitation of oak.

The Schools in the Crypt are very extensive; they have sittings and desks arranged on the combined models of the British and the National Societies, for the reception of 100 infants, 290 girls, and 370 boys, making a total of 760 children.

## ST. JAMES'S CHURCH.

This Church, which in style is early English, is situated in an area at the northern part of the town, where eight streets converge, and it is now so far advanced that a complete idea of its plan may be formed.

The Church is dedicated to Saint James, the patron of the ancient Priory. It consists of a nave and aisles, a clerestory, a chancel forty feet in length, and of north and south transepts, in the latter of which are galleries, approached by external stone staircases, giving a novel and pleasing variety to the eastern part of the church. The aisles are divided from the nave by a range of piers, of bold and simple forms; from these spring the arches which carry the clerestory and roof. At the junction of the nave and chancel is a moulded arch springing from reeded columns. The Chancel will have a three light window, or triplet at the east end, and three coupled lancets in each of the sides; the spaces between these, internally, being arched and feathered, form, in conjunction with the windows, a series of arches on columns extending the whole length of the chancel.

The nave and aisles being unbroken, and unobtruded upon, except by benches, and a small gallery under the south-westernmost arch for the reception of an organ, afford an uninterrupted view from east to west. The entire length is 127 feet; the breadth of the church is 50 feet, and the transepts from north to south 86 feet. The height to the ridge of the roof is 50 feet. The tower and spire are placed at the west end of the north aisle, and rise to the height of 130 feet.

On the south side is a porch, and at the east end are two entrances, with a vestment room and sacristy.

The west window is of considerable magnitude; it consists of three lofty lancets, which, together with the intervening arches, and a triangular window above, occupy the whole of the west end.

The roof, which is of characteristic pitch, has no tie-beams. There are flying buttresses,—at once bold, effective, and of considerable projection,—which, springing from the walls of the aisles, will, in addition to their utility in strengthening the fabric, give great diversity to the exterior, and completely remedy the defect so often observable in many other Churches of merit—the want of union, or connection, between the stone part of the nave and the aisles.

The stone for the whole of the fabric has been supplied from the neighbouring quarries at Flaybrick Hill. The walls are of coursed rubble, the quoins and dressings squared and tooled.

The Church, which is calculated to contain about 1000 adults, and 200 children was founded and has been endowed by William Potter, William Jackson, and John, Macgregor, and William Laird, Esqrs., who have included in the same beneficent contribution, a residence for the Clergyman.

The architect to whom this addition to the sacred edifices of Birkenhead has been confided, is Charles Evans Lang, Esq., a gentleman who has favourably distinguished himself by the construction of the immense piles of houses in the immediate neighbourhood of this Church. Messrs. Walker are the builders.

The Birkenhead Dock Company, who are building several hundred dwellings for their workmen on the adjoining land, have liberally granted a site for Schools to be attached to this Church. They are to accommodate 500 children, and the funds for their erection will be principally contributed by the founders of St. James's Church.

#### THE SCOTCH CHURCH.

This building is situated in Conway Street, and from its somewhat commanding position and handsome exterior, is one of the most striking edifices in the neighbourhood. It was built by public subscription about three years ago. The Gothic style of architecture has been adopted, and the Church appears to combine neatness of external form with internal convenience and fitness. There is a small portion of land attached, used as a burying ground, which considerably enhances the view of the building when seen from the road, and the plot of ground at the front being tastefully laid out with plants, flowers, &c., adds to the general effect.

There are excellent Schools connected with the Church, capable of accommodating one hundred and fifty children; they are conducted on the Scotch parochial system, the fees being exceedingly low, for the purpose of enabling all parties to avail themselves of the advantage they afford. The Church, which is at present in a very flourishing condition, is presided over by the Rev. John Gardner. It is, perhaps, not unworthy of remark here, that the Scottish population has of late years increased considerably in the district of Birkenhead, and among the members of this congregation are many of the highest respectability.

## INDEPENDENT CHAPELS.

Amongst the various buildings erected by the dissenters, and dedicated to the purposes of religion, may be enumerated the neat-looking Independent Chapel in Argyle Street, near the northern angle of Hamilton Square. Though small it is not deficient in architectural attractions, and it comports, in many respects with the handsome edifices by which it is environed. The style of the Chapel is Gothic, and though not spacious, it is commodious, there being seat-room for about 500 persons. The officiating minister is the Rev. Henry Knowles.

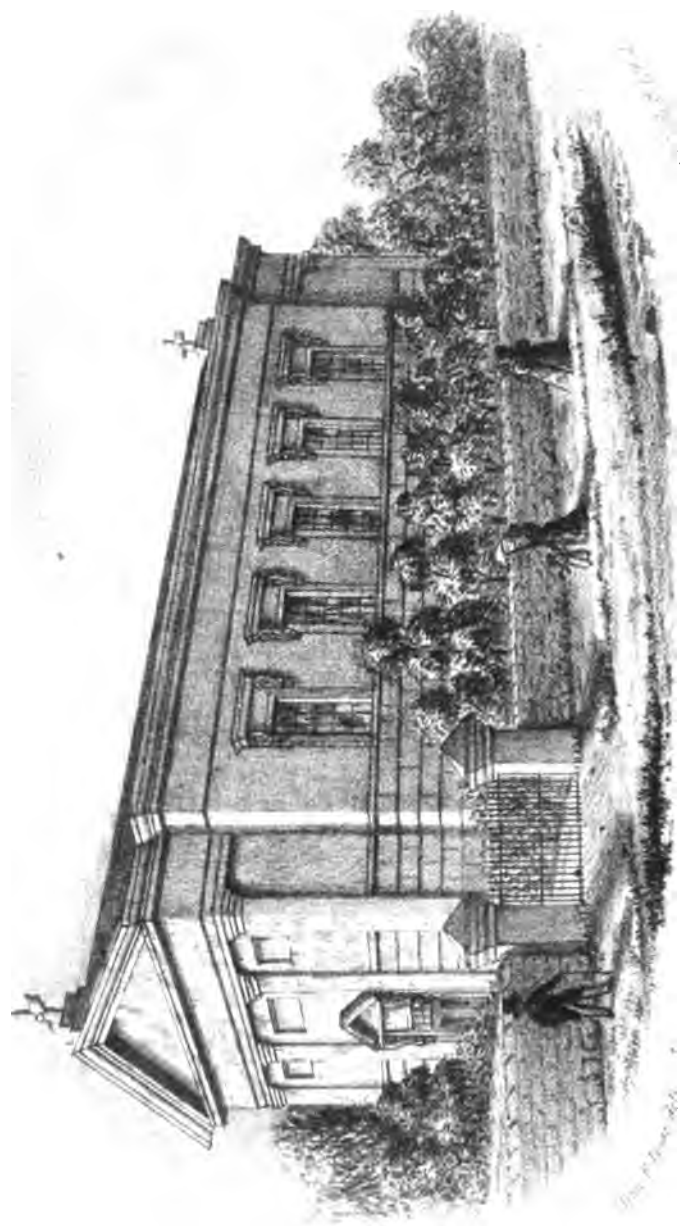
A large and very handsome chapel in Oliver Street has recently been completed for the congregation of WELSH INDEPENDENTS.

## THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPEL

Is a pleasing structure, built of freestone, having a portion of land attached, which is used as a burial ground. It is dedicated to St. Werburgh, and stands on the south side of Grange Lane, a short distance from the entrance to Clifton Park. It presents nothing striking as regards architectural or ornamental design, though in every respect convenient, and well adapted to the religious wants of the Catholic community in that neighbourhood. The building will accommodate about one thousand persons, and the interior presents an appearance of neatness and comfort, in perfect keeping with the whole of the design. This, which is the only place of Catholic worship, at present, in Birkenhead, was erected about eight years since, by subscription. The morning services are repeated several times in the day, the great increase in the Catholic population,—now amounting to about five thousand,—having rendered this indispensable, until the erection of another Chapel, which is about to be built at the north part of the town. At the rear of the building is a suitable residence for the minister, and also a house for the schoolmaster. There are two schools attached, capable of accommodating 600 children. The Rev. William Henderson is the resident officiating minister.

## THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CHAPEL

In Price Street, was erected by public subscription in 1830. It has lately been enlarged, owing to the rapidly increasing population of the district, and is now a spacious and very convenient place of worship, capable of seating from 1000 to 1200



CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY, MORTIMER'S HISTORY OF MIRRAL.

*Lithographed for Mortimer's History of Mirral.*



persons. The building is of brick,—77 feet in length and 43 feet in breadth,—with a stone front and portico, and though not remarkable for architectural embellishments, it possesses all the requirements of a religious meeting-house. It is connected with the Liverpool North Circuit. Underneath are School Rooms of the same size as the Chapel, in which about 150 children attend; for the larger children four-pence per week is paid, which is heavier than is contributed by the parents of children of other denominations in Birkenhead. Another Chapel for the same body is now building at the north end of Price Street.

There are some other small chapels in various parts of the town, among which may be mentioned one belonging to the WELSH METHODISTS. Several congregations avail themselves of the accommodation afforded by the Town Hall, and the Craven Rooms, and a building, spacious but of characteristic simplicity, is now erecting for the use of the SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

#### CEMETERY.

The Commissioners of Birkenhead appear to have entered fully into the desire of altering the custom which has hitherto so generally prevailed, of burying the dead amid the abodes of the living,—a custom fraught with disease and death. Anticipating the extension of the town, in 1842 upwards of seventy acres of land were purchased, and in the following year an Act of Parliament was obtained for “establishing a CEMETERY in Birkenhead and Claughton-cum-Grange or one of them.” The site chosen was a barren rocky tract, a short distance from the north-west angle of the Park, extending to Flaybrick Hill, which, with it, will soon be transformed into a PUBLIC CEMETERY. The entire of the land, the boundary of which is 3134 yards, is by the Act appropriated to the purposes of a Cemetery, the Commissioners requiring further power for sale, except for “vaults, catacombs, or places of burial, within the Cemetery.”

The view from the top of Flaybrick Hill, which is of nearly equal altitude with that of Bidston, is truly splendid, forming a panorama extending over Liverpool and Birkenhead, the Mersey—from the entrance of the river to Runcorn,—the sea to the westward, with the shipping passing and repassing, and the whole extent of country on both shores for many miles.

The greater portion of the area of the Cemetery will be consecrated according to the Rites of the Church of England, in connection with which a Chapel will be erected. A



Chapel will also be built on the unconsecrated part, where any religious ceremony, not inconsistent with the forms of Christian worship, may be performed at the interment of persons of any persuasion. There is also a part appropriated to the burial of the poor. Existing rights are amply respected, and even new ones created. The Commissioners are bound to pay to the incumbent of every parish, from which any body shall have been removed for interment, the sums following: "*i. e.* for every corpse buried in open ground, five shillings, and for every corpse interred in a vault, catacomb, or brick grave, ten shillings."\*

#### CHARITABLE AND LITERARY INSTITUTIONS.

The charitable institutions of Birkenhead are at present limited, but there is a prospect of considerable improvement in this respect ere long. The want of an INFIRMARY is universally admitted, and several large sums of money have been contributed towards a fund for the erection of an edifice suitable to that purpose; difficulties, however, have hitherto been experienced in obtaining an eligible site of land; an obstacle which it is conceived may now be surmounted, and the benevolent intentions of the donors no longer frustrated. In the interim the friends of the poor are obliged to confine their medico-charitable assistance to the DISPENSARY. This institution, which is held *pro tempore*, in a tolerably large house in Hampton Street, is supported by annual subscriptions and donations. The in-door patients are under the immediate care of a resident apothecary, whose wife officiates as matron. There are also several physicians and surgeons, who in addition to their daily alternate attendance in the house, visit the patients when requisite at their own places of abode, supplying them with all medicines, and other necessities. The house contains twenty beds, and it is to be regretted, that owing to the nature of the occupations of the labouring classes, accidents are so frequent, that they are generally all in request.

The affairs of the institution are managed by a Committee chosen from among the Subscribers, and its value may be estimated by the fact, that in the year ending December, 1845, no less than 2723 patients received advice at the Dispensary, 224 were admitted into the Hospital, and 780 persons were attended at their own homes.

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\* The "Table of Fees of the Parish of Liverpool" contains, "for a burial in the Church Yard, including entry in Register, to the Rector 2s. 6d., the parish clerk 1s.," so that the Rector of Liverpool will receive for each of his parishioners buried in Birkenhead,—a fee double the amount chargeable for interment in his own parish.

A LADIES' CHARITY has existed for some time ; it is supported by annual subscription, and is under the patronage of Ladies of the highest respectability, from whom a Committee is annually appointed for the management of its affairs. This Institution, like those of a similar nature at Liverpool,—where the granting of relief in private houses is considered more eligible, than that accommodation which a Maternity Hospital affords—had until lately no public building attached to it. An alteration, however, has recently been made in the management of the Charity; a house has been taken, and will be temporarily used until the completion of a new edifice.

A BANK FOR SAVINGS has existed for several years, and the increasing number of its depositors sufficiently attests the value of the establishment, which is under the patronage and guarantee of the Clergy and Magistrates.

Among other minor institutions may be noticed the LADIES' PROVIDENT SOCIETY and DISTRICT SOCIETIES, which have been formed in Birkenhead, under the personal auspices of the Clergy, and are mainly supported by the personal attention of ladies ; the useful labours of the benevolent contributors to these valuable associations, is directed to visiting the humble abodes of the poor, conveying to them relief and consolation in the hour of distress, and, at other times, encouraging them to habits of economy and solicitude for the future.

The majority of the HOME and FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETIES of the metropolis, whether connected with the Church of England, or with the Dissenting interests, have auxiliary branches in Birkenhead, where the liberality of the several congregations is demonstrated, by their ample contributions to the respective parent funds.

The MECHANICS' INSTITUTION, which has been formed within the last few years, is steadily, though slowly, advancing in its career of utility. The limited means at the disposal of the Committee, and the very inadequate accommodation, which they are consequently enabled to furnish, are totally disproportionate to the rapidly increasing population of the neighbourhood. The list of subscribers is almost a disgrace to Birkenhead,\* especially when it is remembered that this is the only public establishment—excepting the free schools attached to places of worship—in the town, devoted to the advancement of learning. The formation of a Library in connexion with the Institution, is of primary importance, but the state of the funds has hitherto prevented much being done towards the attainment of that desirable object.

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\* In the year 1845, out of a population of nearly thirty thousand, only *twenty-three* individuals were found, either by donation or subscription, to have supported the Mechanics' Institution.

## RECENT SURVEY OF THE HUNDRED OF WIRRAL,

(SEPTEMBER, 1846.)

In the previous pages frequent allusion has been made to the rapidity with which the various townships on the banks of the Mersey are advancing in population and importance, and as some considerable delay has been experienced in the publication of this volume, it has been considered proper to insert the result of a personal visit made in September, 1846, to every township and village in Wirral. In the following observations all the principal places will be noticed; but in those townships which may be denominated *agricultural*, particularly in the Eastern division of the Hundred, so little has occurred worthy of remark that they will be omitted. Their inhabitants are almost exclusively engaged in husbandry, and hitherto it has been the custom in speaking of the almost proverbially bad farming of Cheshire, to point to Wirral as an especial instance of neglected cultivation and supine mismanagement. Yet there can be no question, that, within the last few years, a better state of information and a more extended spirit of enterprise, have gradually pervaded the Hundred; the working farmers gladly availing themselves of those aids and facilities which modern science and investigation have brought to the assistance of agriculture. From this, advantage and improvement may be anticipated, as by introducing better systems of culture, and by developing the capabilities of the soil, vast tracts of sterile land have been converted into fertile pastures and luxuriant corn fields. The increasing intercourse also with the densely populated town of Liverpool, and the streams of wealth which radiate from that great commercial community, have had an effect on its more immediate neighbourhood in Wirral, which must ultimately extend to the remote and hitherto neglected parts of the Hundred.

The statistics of Wirral may be gathered from the table opposite, upon which, having been prepared from official documents, every reliance may be placed. The population in 1841 is taken from the census of that year, being the last official return; but the inhabitants of several of the townships have doubled in number since that year, as will hereafter be noticed.

In the summer of 1845 a variety of Railways were suggested, by which, and by their various branches, Wirral would have been completely reticulated. The Hundred swarmed

PARISHES.		PROPERTY TAX, 1845-6.								
		axes, 3.	Property Assessed under Schedule A, producing at 7d. in the pound.			Property Assessed under Schedule B, producing at 3½d. in the pound.				
			£38	15	10	£7	14	9		
<b>BACKFORD</b> .....	<b>4.</b>	3	£38	15	10	£7	14	9		
		10	80	10	8	5	5	4		
		8	19	15	3	4	13	9		
		2	33	3	11	5	14	6		
<b>BEBINGTON</b> .....	<b>5.</b>	5	225	7	3	8	12	6		
		5	164	14	11	6	15	10		
		8	37	14	5	8	19	4		
		10	77	5	3	6	8	..		
		1	522	12	2	25	12	7		
<b>BIDSTON</b> .....	<b>4.</b>	5	57	3	2	15	14	7		
		5½	71	10	2	6	12	9		
		1	50	16	10	4	19	5		
		2	34	17	6	..	8	9		
<b>BROMBOROUGH</b> .....	<b>2.</b>	4	77	19	..	20	1	2		
		4	34	8	7	..	16	..		
<b>BURTON</b> .....	<b>2.</b>	9	60	..	2	6	15	4		
		8	58	8	7	0	4	3		
<b>EASTHAM</b> .....	<b>8.</b>	10	83	10	..	18	10	2		
		10	64	3	1	16	17	1		
		6	15	8	7	..	3	3		
		1	16	11	1	7	10	10		
		3	62	14	5	3	5	1		
		11	63	18	3	18	13	3		
		5½	46	5	1	6	..	2		
		4	64	16	5	9	17	6		
<b>NESTON</b> .....	<b>8.</b>	10½	165	4	10	31	19	5		
		11	26	16	5	..	2	6		
		11	45	4	2	7	4	6		
		6	60	9	5	10	14	7		
		7	71	7	4	2	13	1		
		6	49	9	2	3	2	1		
		3	57	7	6	13	8	4		
		10	71	12	11	4	1	1		
<b>OVERCHURCH</b> .....	<b>1.</b>	11	56	8	8	15	4	9		
<b>SHOTWICK</b> .....	<b>5.</b>	9	22	..	2	..	..	..		
		2	38	18	2	1	10	7		
		9	50	11	11	6	16	8		
		3	26	7	6	..	15	8		
		7	8	8	5	..	19	11		
<b>HESWALL</b> .....	<b>2.</b>	6	34	15	11	1	3	6		
		11	28	17	6	6	10	10		
<b>STOKE</b> .....	<b>3.</b>	4	32	12	7	7	1	2		
		5	38	10	..	12	15	..		
		..	..	..	..	..	..	..		
<b>THURSTANSTON</b> .....	<b>2.</b>	7	32	14	11	10	13	..		
		..	..	..	..	..	..	..		
<b>WALLASEY</b> .....	<b>3.</b>	4	102	19	3	16	7	5		
		6½	559	19	11	8	14	10		
		11½	428	13	2	14	19	6		
<b>WEST KIRBY</b> .....	<b>9.</b>	1	42	2	10	0	19	3		
		7	34	1	8	11	6	4		
		9	19	4	3	4	6	11		
		1	33	18	..	10	14	..		
		9	28	10	3	1	18	9		
		..	15	2	11	1	1	8		
		1	14	8	1	..	..	..		
		4	23	14	7	2	6	1		
		5	17	7	..	6	2	6		
<b>WOODCHURCH</b> .....	<b>10.</b>	10	46	5	5	5	17	10		
		8	27	9	5	10	16	11		
		10	28	6	3	6	1	1		
		11	10	4	2	5	10	..		
		5	17	19	..	6	19	1		
		11	122	..	6	13	1	2		
		6	10	7	8	4	4	7		
		4	28	7	6	6	..	2		
		1	14	1	4	..	4	5		
		1	29	6	10	6	16	..		
<b>EXTRA PAROCHIAL</b> .....	<b>4½</b>	2743	3	9	..	..	..	7		
DITTO .....		4	38	3	..	17	4	9		
DITTO .....		3	37	3	11	16	5	4		
DITTO .....		..	13	11	3	6	5	8		
St. MARY'S, CHESTER .....		4	16	7	5	3	14	3		
HOLY TRINITY, " .....		1	56	9	5	22	..	1		
St. OSWALD'S, " .....		8	13	13	6	..	14	6		
DITTO .....		..	..	..	..	..	..	..		
		10½	7493	10	4	578	16	1		

Of the 83,978 Inhabitants of Wirral, 19,164 were Natives of Cheshire, 11,220 of other parts of the Kingdom, 1981 were Irish, and 826 Scotch, 131 were born Abroad, and the birth place of 386 is unknown.



with surveyors, and their usual engineering staff, there being at one period no less than nine lines projected for the 'extension of,' or the 'connection,' 'junction,' or 'amalgamation with,' the Railway between Chester and Birkenhead, or the rising port of the latter. At each successive stage of Parliamentary proceedings the number of these schemes gradually diminished; the plans of some were not deposited, others failed in Committee, and one—only one, now remains, the BIRKENHEAD, LANCASHIRE, AND CHESHIRE JUNCTION RAILWAY, for which an Act was obtained the 26th June, 1846. Operations have already commenced on this line, which is intended to consist of two main branches, which—the one commencing at the Hooton Station of the Chester and Birkenhead line, and the other in Chester,—will unite at Helsby. From thence the road will be continued *via* Frodsham, Warrington, and Altrincham, to Stockport. At Altrincham it joins the existing line to Manchester, and near Preston Brook it intersects the Grand Junction, or rather the London and North-Western, the directors of which have undertaken to construct a branch from near Warrington to the Bolton and Leigh line. The entire length of the line will be forty-six miles, and the engineers estimate of the cost is £1,400,000. Several other branches were surveyed and plans deposited, but the reluctance of Parliament, and the country to sanction any lines that were not considered *requisite* for the immediate wants of their localities, induced the directors to withdraw those schemes for the present. The advantages which may be anticipated from the Birkenhead, Lancashire, and Cheshire Junction Railway, and the almost *absolute* necessity of such a line, are fully detailed in a minute of the Board of Trade, dated 16th April, 1846, which is inserted on pages 354-6.

Powers have been obtained to extend the present Railroad at Birkenhead to the water side; and branch rails will be continued from thence, by the Dock Company, to their various Docks and Warehouses, which will greatly facilitate the transit of Goods and merchandize, between the manufacturing districts, and the shipping.

#### PARISH OF BEBINGTON.

In commencing this Itinerary at TRANMERE, the rapid increase in its population demands attention. In 1841 Tranmere contained only 457 houses, of which 43 were building or unoccupied, but by the assessment for the Poor rate, allowed by the Magistrates, in March, 1846, the number of inhabited houses was 1041; which, according

to the average population at the last census, would have had 6420 inhabitants. The last six months have added considerably to these numbers; and there are now upwards of two hundred houses building, together with many shops. The far greater number of these houses are of a very inferior description, there being no restrictions upon buildings, by any local enactments, similar to those which have been found so useful in the adjacent town of Birkenhead. The propriety of applying to Parliament for power to regulate buildings in Tranmere, and to provide for the better watching, lighting, and sewerage of the streets, and the general management of the affairs of the township has been the subject of frequent discussions. Meeting after meeting has been held, and various committees appointed; yet, although it would be difficult to find a place where such provisions are more requisite, every projected measure has hitherto been negatived, and the streets remain in a state as disgraceful to the town, as they are dangerous to individuals: in several parts are deep excavations—old stone quarries,—on the margin of the roads, without any fence or other protection. In Clifton Park and the neighbourhood, several elegant houses have been built; and the southern part of the town exhibits decided marks of improvement.

On an elevated situation, partly in this township and partly in that of Higher Bebington, stands a new village called Dacre Park, consisting of about forty acres. It has been laid out with great judgment, and already contains about twenty houses, and others are in course of erection. Many of these are of very good character, and being in the immediate neighbourhood of the ferries, and yet removed from the bustle of the town, this new village bids fair to become a favourite place of residence.

Three chapels are building in Tranmere, and the increasing population appears to require another Church. To the Dispensary, and other local charities already named, another has recently been added, entitled the PROVIDENT CLOTHING SOCIETY. It is well deserving that support which the wealthy can so easily extend to the more numerous class of their less favoured brethren by whom they are surrounded.

The Bill, referred to in page 199, to authorize making a Dock at Tranmere, was withdrawn, and another introduced by the same party, but upon a different plan, in the last session, shared the same fate. The cost of the Works were estimated at £170,500, and the anticipated traffic was stated at £15,231, but the project, however, seems now entirely abandoned. The fine sheet of water, formerly known as Tranmere Pool, has been encroached upon to an extent that leaves it now only a narrow channel,

through which the noxious residuum of the public Gas Works slowly finds its way into the Mersey.

In the other townships of BEBINGTON, although little deserving of notice has occurred, there is evident proof of their encreasing importance. The Chester and Birkenhead Railway Company have opened several New Stations, and established a system of cheap annual contracts, which will greatly facilitate the communication between this Parish and Birkenhead.

The Parish Church is undergoing considerable alterations, and by an addition in continuing the northern aisle the full length of the edifice, the original design of the architect will, to a great extent, be effected. A plaster ceiling, by which the bold carpentry of the ancient roof was concealed, has been removed. The interior will now have an imposing effect, as the additional part of the roof will be framed in the same high-pitched style, and the entire will be renovated and stained to resemble oak.

According to the rate laid on the 26th August, 1846, the number of *inhabited* houses in HIGHER BEBINGTON was 209, a number exceeding that in the census of 1841 by 66, or nearly one-third, and showing a population of about 1250. The greater portion of these houses—and of many more not yet completed—near to the Railway Station and to Tranmere, are of a description similar to those in that township, and crowded together with equal disregard to health and domestic comfort. But those in the neighbourhood of the Rock Park, and some other parts, are of a different character, being detached villas, exhibiting a great display of taste and elegance. Many of the mansions are furnished with gardens and conservatories, which have largely contributed to the “Bebington Annual Flower Shows,” so justly celebrated for their choice specimens of floral and horticultural productions.

In LOWER BEBINGTON the increase within the last few years has been equally rapid; one or two villages are gradually forming, and, ere long, Primrose, Trafalgar, and some other hamlets in this Township, may call for a separate description.\*

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\* The inhabitants of Lower Bebington have hitherto suffered much inconvenience from the inadequate supply of water; which henceforth will be remedied by the construction of a public well, the free use of which, for ever, is now guaranteed to the whole township. The requisite site was given by Thomas Green, Esq., of Poulton, the representative of the ancient families of Lancelyn, and of Green, who succeeded to the lordship of Bebington on the demise of his grandfather, Thomas Green, Esq., of Poulton Hall, in 1845.



Several capitalists have taken lands in POULTON and STORETON, and by their exertion a marked improvement has taken place in the appearance of many of the farms. In the former township the Spittal estates will probably be soon covered with detached villas, as they are advertized for that purpose, and from their easy distance from the ferries, and the accommodations afforded by the Chester and Birkenhead Railway, combined with their secluded situation and the undulation of the surface, they are peculiarly adapted for the residences of the affluent traders of Liverpool.

The rapid approaches making on every side towards BROMBOROUGH, lead to the opinion that the day is not distant when it will be brought into more active and beneficial operation. The margin of Bromborough Pool, which winds several miles into the interior, is most valuable, and, having a good depth of water, it is probable that the extension of the docks at Liverpool—now occupying the greater part of the strand of the Mersey, and which has driven ship-building from that town—will cause the banks of this pool to be, ere long, occupied by carpenters' yards, and the other busy appliances of trade and commerce. The Railway Company have established a station in this township.

In EASTHAM, so generally considered one of the most delightful localities on the banks of the Mersey, an extensive tract of land, containing upwards of two hundred acres, was, in the summer of 1846, taken by Mr. William Laird, of Birkenhead, from Sir William Stanley, with the intention of forming a Park.

Much activity is shewn in endeavouring to bring this (which is by far the largest private speculation of a similar nature in the Hundred) into immediate operation. Fences have been removed, ditches filled up, and the entire laid out under the direction of Mr. Kempe, landscape gardener, Birkenhead; and it is not too much to predict that this—CARLETT PARK—will soon become one of the most favourite places of residence near Liverpool, from which it is only distant about five miles, being within ten minutes walk from the Railway Station, and less from the Eastham (or ancient Carlett) Ferry. Situated on an eminence, sufficient to command an unrivalled inland view of the Mersey, which here assumes the appearance of a vast lake; based on the red sand-stone formation which pervades that vicinity, and protected by the rich woods of Bromborough from the severity of the north and north-eastern winds, this and the adjacent township, have long been celebrated for the salubrity of the climate. Two centuries

since, the antiquary Webb, speaking of "the oldest knight of this land," (a Stanley, who lived here to witness the fourth generation of his illustrious house) referred to the well-known "healthfulness" of Eastham at that period,—a fact which has been amply confirmed by the subsequent parochial registers.

WHITBY LOCKS. By the lamented death of the late Marquis of Westminster, the townships of NETHERPOOL and OVERPOOL, with his estates in WHITBY, passed to his eldest son, the present Marquis, who was soon afterwards appointed Lord Lieutenant of the County, on the demise of the venerated Earl of Stamford and Warrington.

ELLESMERE-PORT, the only place of any consequence in the immediate neighbourhood exhibits great inactivity. Large piles of bricks indicate that building is suspended; and there is probably no town in the kingdom, possessed of equal advantages, which presents so dull—so gloomy, an appearance. By an Act of Parliament, passed 3rd August, 1845, the Ellesmere and Chester Canal Company merged into the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company, by whom the carrying trade at this place is now conducted.

Turning from Ellesmere-Port, through the parishes of STOKE and BACKFORD towards the Dee, the same inactivity by which inland townships are generally distinguished prevails, and nothing occurs worthy of observation; nor does the Western part of the Hundred,\* bordering on the land reclaimed from that river, present anything more interesting. All the projects for crossing into Wales from SHOTWICK parish, have been abandoned; one, indeed, has again been suggested, but the opposition of the Citizens of Chester, who are apprehensive that it will injure the navigation of their port, will most probably prevent its being carried into effect. The vast expense

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\* In the description of Burton, page 215, the following note was omitted:—

The inhabitants of the manor of Burton enjoyed several immunities from the harsh customs of the Forester's jurisdiction. Among others, the tenants of the manor were exempt from having the feet of their dogs cut (*expiditatos*), which all others, who lived within the limits of the forest were compelled to observe, until they could be passed through the Master Forester's "dog-guage." This was a ring, usually of an oval form, about an inch in height by a inch-and-half in width. One of these barbarous instruments, formerly used by the Parkers (bow-bearers of the forest of Bowland), is now in Browsholme Hall: *there* is an engraving of Whitaker's history of Whalley.

The statement that the ancient seat of the Masseys at PUDDINGTON has long since been taken down, is not quite correct, for much of it yet remains, but in so mutilated a condition, that it is with difficulty recognized. It has recently been taken by some farmers, who are about to introduce the Scottish system of farming into this township. One of the two advanced wings of Puddington Hall, continues to be used as a Roman Catholic Chapel, to which purpose it was appropriated previously to the occupation of the Hall by its present tenant.

of a lofty bridge over the river, with the requisite embankment of some miles to approach it, present still greater obstacles to such an undertaking.

The improvements which have latterly been made at PARKGATE, entitle it to a greater degree of support, as a watering-place, than it has recently received: the Magistrates have removed their Sessional Meetings from hence to NESTON, where a small Court-house, and a temporary prison are erecting.

The route from this town, through the parishes of HESWALL and THURSFANSTON, presents nothing for observation. Much of the road between the townships of those names, is over the summit of Heswall Hills; in a condition so execrable, as to cause the traveller to hail with satisfaction, the excellent approach to CALDY; a village than which none can be in a cleaner, neater, or better condition.

In WEST KIRKBY, several new houses have been built; and in various parts of the Parish considerable improvements may be noticed. The extension of the public works at Birkenhead and Seacombe, will drive many to seek that seclusion in these parts, which those townships no longer afford.

HOYLAKE—a name which appears to have been transferred from the lake to the village—has been crowded with visitors during the last summer, and several large establishments are building for their further accommodation. In the early part of the year 1846 a very interesting discovery was made in this neighbourhood. A large quantity of Miscellaneous Antiquities of every period, were found in the alluvial soil; their numbers, and the diversity of their character, attracted much attention; and, fortunately, they fell into the hands of the Rev. Alexander Hume, LL.D. of the Liverpool Collegiate Institution, who prepared a paper on the subject, which has been read before the Archæological Institute, at York. At the earnest desire of many Members of that Society, it will shortly be published, with illustrations of several of the singular articles therein described.

The fine beach from Hoylake to New Brighton, a distance of upwards of six miles, is in a great measure deserted; for beyond one or two Warreners' huts, Leasowe Castle and the Lighthouse are the only habitations on that long and delightful coast. Leaving, therefore, the sea shore, and passing by FRANKBY and GREASBY, and several smaller townships which do not call for observation, through UPTON, where several new houses are building, there is little to interest the traveller until he arrives at WOODCHURCH, where the ancient Church will amply repay the trouble of an inspec-

tion.\* It has recently undergone an entire renovation, and has been furnished with a peal of five bells. Considerable activity prevails in several parts of this Parish, and particularly in OXTON, which is rapidly increasing in importance.

The flourishing state of this Township, which has been already referred to, still continues; and although the land has been greatly divided among small holders on building leases, the principal portion yet remains, subject to restrictions on the style and character of the houses, whereby a pleasing appearance will be preserved, and a guarantee afforded for the future well condition of the township. Few places, indeed, possess greater advantages of situation than Oxtan; its elevated position, its ready access to the ferries on the Mersey, through the well maintained roads of Birkenhead; its proximity to the enchanting park of that township, and the total absence of all manufactures, will ever command a preference with those who wish for a near country retreat. Large sums of money have recently been expended in the making and improving of the public roads; one of them—a street called the Shrewsbury Road—is hardly exceeded by any in this part of the Kingdom, being about two thousand yards in length, and twenty yards in width, bounded on both sides by land belonging to William Potter, Esq.

A Church which is now building on the south side of Oxtan Hill, at an elevation of several hundred feet above the sea, commands a most extensive view of Cheshire and North Wales. This Church is in the Early English Style of Gothic Architecture, with

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\* A very beautiful specimen of an obituary window, has lately been erected in the Parish Church, to the memory of two members of the family of George-King of Tranmere, Esq. This ancient method of commemorating the departed, unlike many offensive monuments by which the interior of churches are frequently deformed, is pre-eminently subservient to the decoration of the sacred structure. The window in question is at the east end of the south aisle, and consists of eight circular-headed compartments, in two tiers, of four lights each. The upper lights are occupied by emblems of an exclusively sacred character, with a variegated cross in each, (the church being dedicated to the Holy Cross.) In one of the lower lights is contained a medallion, representing a figure rising from the waves, accompanied by emblems of the resurrection, (the deceased having been buried at sea,) with the appropriate text from the book of Revelation underneath, "*Dedit mare mortuos qui in eo erant.*" And in another, a medallion representing a female figure kneeling before the open Bible, having underneath the text from the Psalms, "*Lucerna pedibus meis verbum tuum, et lumen semitis meis.*" whilst throughout the upper portion of each of the eight lights, the following inscription is disposed on labels:—"In Gloriam—Dei Salvatorem—In Reverentiam—Ecclesie ejus—Atque in—Memoriam—Servorum—Ejus." The ground-work of the window is of a dark blue, and its truly ecclesiastical character may well recommend it as an example for imitation by parties anxious to discharge a similar duty to their departed kindred. The base is inscribed "*Catherina Georgii King Conjugis, qua consopita est xxvi Maii A. S., MDCCCXLV; Georgii Smith King, qui consopitus est quinto Decembris A. S., MDCCCXLIV.*"

transepts, and will be furnished with a tower and spire, forming a conspicuous object for miles. The interior of the Church will have an open roof, and a gallery at the west end. The designs, which are by Mr. Edward Welch, of Liverpool, (an architect to whom Birmingham is indebted for its Town Hall,) are remarkable for their simplicity and economy in their arrangements. The Church when finished will accommodate about one thousand persons, and the cost of its erection is intended to be defrayed by public subscription, towards which, the Rev. Joshua King, the Rector of Woodchurch, has contributed one thousand pounds, and he has also appropriated the Easter dues to a fund for its endowment. This Church will be a great accommodation to the rapidly increasing population of Oxton, which may now be estimated to contain about 1400 inhabitants, more than double the number resident in 1841. In the last Rate Book, that of 1846, the number of inhabited houses is stated to be 255: in 1841 there were 105, occupied by 546 persons. A plot of land has been presented for a Roman Catholic Chapel, and subscriptions are now making towards the expense of the erection.

- Leaving the Parish of Woodchurch, and entering that of BIDSTON, the extensive plain towards the sea presents no alteration. Moreton, Saughall, and several other townships, remain as before; but in the village of Bidston, and its more immediate neighbourhood, considerable improvements are making. The Parish Church is undergoing some repairs, by which its former character will, in a great measure, be restored. Numbers of men are employed in sewerage and widening the old roads, and laying out new streets in various directions.

Continuing a northern course, the scenery in crossing Bidston Marsh,—an area of upwards of five hundred acres,—affords ample scope for varied contemplation. On the left all is rural retirement: far as the eye can reach is an extensive plain, the green surface of which, occasionally crowded with grazing cattle, is only studded here and there with the whitewashed cottages of the herd. The observer is reminded of the low levels of Holland, for not a single hill or even an eminence of any kind presents itself in an area of several square miles, until the eye rests upon the artificial embankment, by which it is protected from the ravages of the sea; that sea, frequently covered with the numerous fleets by which Liverpool is connected with every part of the civilized universe. Immediately in front, the venerable tower of Wallasey Church rears its head from the edge of the abrupt terrace on which that ancient village stands.

To the right a very different scene is presented; there all is in a state of the greatest activity; new roads are opening on each side of Wallasey Pool to the new Bridge; and hundreds of men are busily employed, at the quarries, the excavation of the Cemetery, the new Church, the numerous "Dock Cottages," and other Public Works, which extend from Bidston, through Birkenhead, to the shore of the Mersey.

The important PARISH OF WALLASEY exhibits decided marks of improvement; although in the Township of that name, there is not a single house building. How different is the gloomy appearance which Wallasey now exhibits, to that which it presented when, in 1690, the troops of William III. were encamped in the village and neighbourhood, previously to their embarkation for Ireland in the year 1696, accompanied by His Majesty in person, and a brilliant staff, including the Duke of Monmouth, the Marquis of Ormonde, the Earls of Manchester, Oxford, Portland and Scarborough, and many others. The host of the "Cheshire Cheese" still takes pleasure in showing the kitchen, which is traditionally reported to have been selected for the royal dormitory.

LISCARD. Approaching New Brighton, the face of the country becomes more thickly studded with detached villas, and every quarter affords proof of suburban prosperity. In no place can the triumph of art and industry, over the sterility of nature, be more apparent than in this neighbourhood, where many of the mansions, now imbedded in tolerably luxuriant foliage, occupy a site which only a few years since was a heap of barren sandhills. The provisions of the Wallasey Improvement Act, whereby Commissioners are appointed to regulate the general affairs of Liscard and Poulton, will most probably be productive of advantage to those townships; although many appear to consider the machinery of the Act, likely to be found more expensive than valuable. It will, however, have at least one good effect, that of checking the rapid increase of houses of an inferior class; which, unfettered by the restrictions imposed in some of the adjacent Townships, were springing up in every direction, without any regard to regularity, to health, or even comfort. Several large houses have recently been erected in a style of much magnificence; but they do not possess sufficient general interest, to call for a more particular description.

The onward progress of Liscard may be estimated by the fact that, although in 1841 it contained only 406 inhabited houses, it had in June 1846, no less than 454 inhabited houses; which would show a corresponding population at that time of about 3200, against 2873, the number of residents in 1841: and there are now about seventy houses in course of erection.

Allusion has already been made to the improvement which has taken place in the Agriculture of Wirral. It would be unpardonable, therefore, to take leave of Liscard, without particularly referring to one who stands pre-eminent amid the most successful of those, to whom the Hundred is so much indebted for their endeavours to accomplish this desirable object,—one who has created a garden where a wilderness formerly prevailed, and clothed with verdure and luxuriance a district in which the dock, the thistle, and the rush, had before held undisputed sway—Harold Littledale of Liscard Hall, and of Liverpool, of which town he is one of the principal merchants. The following animated description of Mr. Littledale's farming establishment at Liscard, is from the pen of a noble lord, by whom, in company with several distinguished personages, it was recently inspected.

“ The model farm of this Gentleman is unquestionably one of the greatest lions of the day, as is proved by its being almost daily visited by every one who takes an interest in agriculture. No expense has been spared; and as the whole arrangements have been made under one of the best practical farmers of the day, Mr. Torr of Lincoln, the result has been, as might have been expected, most satisfactory. The Farm consists of 440 acres of arable land, with the model buildings of which the following is a slight sketch.

“ They consist of a neat and picturesque house for the bailiff, a dairy, four cottages for the labourers, stabling and cowsheds, rick yard, and every other requisite convenience. There are one hundred stalls for cows, as well ventilated as Her Majesty's stables at Buckingham Palace, together with the proper buildings for calves. There are piggeries with Torr's patent troughs, one of the neatest and most useful inventions ever made. The dairy, which is attached to the bailiff's house, is a very neat building, the walls being hollow so as to exclude the heat in summer; it contains a marble fountain, which would put to shame those exquisite specimens of national taste recently erected in Trafalgar Square. Among the farm offices are, a place for smoking hams, one for curing bacon, a slaughter house, a smithy, compost sheds, and manure tanks; while a large pond feeds a tank, which extends over the whole of one of the buildings, and supplies the horses and cattle with water.

"Among the more modern inventions is a steam engine, which, unlike many "Jack of all trades," is, really, master of all; for it thrashes the corn, divides the grain with the same operation into three qualities, Nos. 1, 2, and 3; grinds the corn into flour; cuts dry and green food for the cattle, conveys it to the steaming house, steams it; supplies a drying kiln for taking the moisture out of damp corn, crushes beans and oats, mixes food for the pigs, and churns the butter!! If some of our revered ancestors, the gentlemen farmers of a hundred years ago, could rise from their graves, and see this leviathan engine at work, doing the labour of some dozen of hands by machinery, they would, indeed, be scared out of their senses. The buildings were erected by Messrs. Samuel & James Holme, of Liverpool, and add laurels to their former reputation, obtained by the building of many of the public edifices of Liverpool."

The route from New Brighton,—the north-east extremity of Liscard and of Wirral, through Egremont to Seacombe, is so cut up into streets, and exhibits such piles of unfinished and unoccupied buildings, that it would almost justify the expression, that the "City of the Future" was situated on both sides of Wallasey Pool. The expectation of many of the owners of property, in the neighbourhood of EGREMONT, seems to be of the most sanguine character: houses and shops are building in such numbers, that it will require years to furnish them with occupiers.

The first object which attracts attention on entering SEACOMBE, is a new Church, erecting by subscription, on a rather commanding elevation, immediately above the Ferry. This Church, which will be dedicated to St. Paul, and licensed as a Chapel of Ease, under Wallasey, is from designs by Mr. John Hay, of Liverpool,—an artist who is rapidly rising into repute as regards ecclesiastical architecture, and who has recently erected several sacred edifices in the neighbourhood of Liverpool. Though the Church is not remarkable for any elaborate decorations, yet its admirable proportions, which are strictly maintained throughout the entire building, are well deserving of notice. The open roof—at once eminently scientific and extremely simple—which has been executed in a most perfect manner by Robert Westmore of West Derby, Lancashire, is from an original design of the architect, and it is probably unmatched in ancient or modern carpentry. It cannot be too strongly recommended to those who may be engaged in the erection of similar structures; and all who feel interested in the encouragement of the reviving taste for ancient architecture, will be gratified by an inspection of this elegant Church. The style adopted, is that which may be denomi-



nated the Early Middle Pointed,—that which prevailed about the latter part of the thirteenth century. The Church consists of a nave, chancel, and south porch; and it is to be furnished with an elegant spire, rising about 120 feet. It will contain about five hundred persons; for whose accommodation low benches are provided, all invidious distinction between those which are free and those that are appropriated, being thus avoided. A charity School will be erected in connexion with this Church.

The other parts of this township (Seacombe) exhibit decided marks of improvement. A Dispensary, with some other minor Charitable Institutions, have been recently established; and a Court-house has been erected for the accommodation of the Magistrates when holding the Petty Sessions for the Western Division of Wirral. More attention has been paid to the style and character of the houses lately built here, and several wide streets have been laid out, which, intersecting each other at right angles, will give a better and more uniform appearance to the new part of Seacombe. The communication with the Southern part of the Hundred will be greatly facilitated by the Bridge and other works of the Birkenhead Dock Commissioners, whose extensive operations commence near Seacombe Ferry. A Pier extends from thence towards Birkenhead, for about six hundred yards, when it turns acutely to the westward, and will be continued about the same length, until it reaches the beach at the south side of Poulton, enclosing a triangular space of most valuable land, convertible to building or marine purposes.

Some delay has taken place in the construction of the works on the north side of Wallasey Pool, from the disinclination of several of the landed proprietors to bound their property with a sea wall; but the Birkenhead Commissioners considering this essential, have given the usual parliamentary notice of their intention to apply for powers to enforce the building of such a wall as their engineers may require. It is most probable that some arrangement will be made ere long, and the works extended along the entire front or sea-beach of Seacombe, to the bridge at the little sequestered village of POULTON, which hitherto has retained its pristine seclusion without participating in the great alterations and rapid improvements which distinguish the surrounding neighbourhood.

After re-crossing Wallasey Pool, BIRKENHEAD, is again entered at a point presenting unusual claims to attention. In the road leading from the bridge are immense piles of lofty buildings, bearing the rather inappropriate name of the *Dock Cottages*.\* These buildings do not seem to meet the approval of the class of persons for whom they were intended; only about a dozen of them are yet inhabited, and even these have already changed their tenants several times. Their mode of construction

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\* The following extracts from two popular writers give very different opinions of these buildings :

In 'Chambers' Journal,' February, 1847, we find the following :  
 " Among the best schemes yet brought into operation, in regard to erecting new houses, is that at Birkenhead, the rising town opposite Liverpool. Some time ago the 'Times' presented an account of the visit of Mr. Chadwick and other gentlemen to the dwellings erected for the working classes, from which we gather the following particulars :—Without drawings or plans, it would be difficult to give an accurate conception of the improvements. The buildings are four-storeyed, of red brick, with light sandstone window-sills and copings. Their external aspect would suggest to a Londoner the idea of a block of buildings constructed for professional persons, for an inn or court of Chancery, and with little addition and variation of ornament, they might match with the new hall of Lincoln's Inn. They are, in fact, flats or sets of chambers, consisting of two sets on each floor. Each set consists of one living-room and two sleeping-rooms. The floors are of arched brick. The living-room is floored with a hard Welsh fire-brick tile ; the sleeping-room floors are boarded. The staircases are of stone, with iron balustrades. The flat brick arches of which the floors are constructed are tied together with iron ties, and the whole building is fireproof. The most important points of improvement are, however, those in which some principles of the sanatory report, in respect to the means of cleansing and ventilation for the working-classes are carried out. Each set of rooms is furnished with a constant supply of water, and also with sinks for washing, and a water-closet, and means of communication with a dust shaft from the whole set of chambers, by which all dust and ashes might be removed at once from the apartments without the necessity of the inmates leaving them. The party entered the rooms which were inhabited, and questioned the inmates as to their experience of them. One nursing mother, in a neat and well-kept set of rooms, attested to the superior convenience of this arrangement, as a most important relief from the

"We are all delighted with the sound of "Home, sweet home." It has attractions and endearments which neither time or distance can destroy. The heart of man, however it may be diverted by the storms of life, still, like the needle, points instinctively to home. Humble as is the condition of the poor man's cot, yet upon the whole we find his attachments to home are even stronger than those of the rich, who are so much exposed to rival attractions. To promote, to further this attachment, every facility should be afforded for erecting healthier cottages, and putting a stop to the habit of crowding large numbers in a small place. We are sorry, however, to see very little, if any, progression in the plans for erecting cottage houses. We often cast an eye upon the new erections starting up on every side, but seldom find anything strikingly new, or evincing any improvement on the old plans. Cheapness to the occupier, and good profit to the owner, seem to take the place of the love of experiment, or any material wish to deviate from established custom. We had read a good deal about an improved system of building cottages at Birkenhead, and were given to understand that these cottages were looked upon as models. Last week we took an opportunity of inspecting them but we confess we were sorely disappointed. Instead of convenient and roomy cottages, with yards or little gardens attached, and situated in wide, airy streets, we found that these "improved" cottages, 350 in number, were built in streets of only six yards wide, with a cross street at the end nearly preventing all circulation ; that the tenements were piled one above another in "flats," after the Edinburgh fashion ; and that none had a single inch of out-door yard, either back or front. The buildings are four stories high, with a common stair for every eight families, who are to live one above another. The apartments, also, are wretchedly small. Each has a day room, measuring only 13 ft. by 9 ft. 9 in., and two bed-rooms, measuring each 9 feet by 6 ft. As the wives sometimes say,—"There is not room to whip a cat in

has been the subject of much diversity of opinion; but, unquestionably, their distance, according to the present arrangements, from the proposed Graving Docks, will render them very inconvenient for the labourers and others employed at those works. It is calculated that these houses will furnish residences for about sixteen hundred persons, for whose accommodation the elegant church of St. James, which forms the great architectural ornament of the neighbourhood, has been erected.

The land between the Bridge and this Church belongs to the Birkenhead Dock Company, whose property extends from hence to the Woodside Ferry, a distance of two miles, by the margin of Wallasey Pool; a creek which for ages has only served to absorb a portion of the tidal waters, leaving at the reflux of every tide some hundred acres of barren mud, exhaling noxious vapours by which the surrounding atmosphere was infected.

The foundation stone of the Docks was laid on the 23rd October, 1844, by Sir

fatigue and exposure to the weather in a common town dwelling. She had now no occasion to leave her child alone whilst she went to a distance to fetch water; neither had she to keep dirty or waste water, or dirt or ashes in the room, until she could find time to carry them away. 'She had now scarcely ever to go down stairs and leave her child.' Each set of rooms was provided with one conduit for the ingress of fresh air, and another for the egress of vitiated air. Those examined were newly inhabited, but the immediate sanatory effect of the arrangements was perceptible to those who have visited such abodes in the entire absence of offensive effluvia or of "close smells." This observation was extended to the whole range of buildings. The sinks in each room were trapped with bell-traps, as were all the openings to the drain and the gully-shoots in the paved courts and thoroughfares. A constant supply of water was secured, the house-drains were well flushed with water, and cesspools were entirely abolished. This range of buildings is perhaps the first practical example of the entire removal of one chief source of physical depression and pestilence common to all the existing dwellings of the working-classes in towns. The price at which these objects were attained was the next topic of inquiry. The rents charged were from 3s. 6d. to 5s. each set, according to its position. But this included a constant supply of water, and the use of one gas-burner in each set of rooms, and all rates and taxes, and moreover, two iron bedsteads, and a grate with an oven, and convenient fixtures."

them!" As to the health of people who live in such narrow streets, pent up at one end, and crowded in vast numbers, it is unnecessary to remark. Let fever break out, and the scourge would be dreadful. Each of these cottages is to have a dust hole down which all the refuse descends into one common receptacle. a gas-light, water-tap, and water-closet. But these, though conveniences, cannot compensate for want of room, and want of ventilation. The roofs are surrounded by a battlement, and the clothes will be dried on the tops of the houses. The cottages are erected by the Dock Company, and intended for their labourers; and though we think no one would occupy them from choice, most likely the poor families depending upon Dock employment for subsistence, will be obliged to become the unwilling tenants. The altitude of the buildings, the narrowness of the streets, the prominent and peculiar appearance of the narrow closet windows, and the uniformity of the whole range, give the pile of buildings, at a distance, the appearance of a large hospital or asylum, or to adopt the Birkenhead appellation, "Barracks." They are built remote from the town, and about two miles from the ferry, a situation, we presume, where the price of land could not be an object. We returned from our inspection much disappointed; and could not help remarking that the reputed excellencies of distant men and distant things almost always vanish, as we come closer in contact with them."

Philip de Malpas Grey Egerton, Bart., M.P., for the Southern Division of Cheshire, supported by many of the Nobility and Gentry, in the presence of from eighty to one hundred thousand persons. The proceedings upon that eventful occasion,—the charitable donations to the poor, the liberality to the working classes, the procession, dinners, banquets, balls, fireworks,—all were “so spirited, so splendid, so dazzling, so unique, and yet so comprehensive” that any adequate description would be an affair of no small difficulty; none, however highly drawn, or apparently exaggerated, could do justice to the varied rejoicings which, from the early dawning of the morning, followed in rapid succession, until long after the sun had sunk in the horizon.

The works thus joyously commenced have continued to progress in the most spirited manner, and they will, in a great measure, be completed, according to the plan described on page 360. But several essential alterations and improvements have been suggested; one of the most important of which is, the construction of a huge Tunnel, and of Graving Docks near the Southern entrance, upon a site which, according to the original intention, would have been the property of the Woods and Forests, but which was, in August, 1846, exchanged for other lands belonging to the Dock Company. It is more than probable that other alterations will take place in the further prosecution of the plans, which seem to require a greater fixity of purpose than has latterly been exhibited, and the want of which may in some measure account for the present great depression in the value of the stock of the company. Two Docks have, however, already been constructed, the “Morpeth Dock,” which is a passage dock of about 350 yards in length, leading from Woodside Ferry; and the “Egerton Dock,” near Bridge End, so called from having been formerly the site of a small rivulet, or more correctly, of a creek or armlet of the sea, the tide passing under a bridge.

The walls of both the new Docks are built of red freestone, principally quarried on the ground, and with ashlar bindings. There are a number of arches (facing the river) at the upper dock, on each side of a tongue forming a quay running westward, which protect the mouths of sluices, intended to scour the Great Basin, which has yet to be constructed on the east. These arches, apparently about twenty in all, and also the piers, are beautifully built of Bolton and Longridge stone. The whole of the hollow of the gates are of Anglesey limestone, as well as the rubbing-bands round the piers and entrances. There are large sluices on each side of a thirty-feet lock for scouring the outer basin. The Dock gates into the “Morpeth Dock” from the Woodside Basin,

are principally constructed of "greenheart," and are as strong and substantial as timber and metal can make them. The entrance is fifty feet wide in the clear, and the sill is of the same depth as the Prince's Dock in Liverpool. The other entrance is seventy feet wide. The bridge across the seventy-foot passage will have three roads—two for carriages, and one for the extension of the Chester and Birkenhead railroad.

Water was first let into the Docks on the 27th of March: and the other works connected with them, and the harbour, are proceeding so rapidly that it is confidently anticipated, that in the course of the ensuing autumn another Dock, for the reception of vessels engaged in the Timber trade, will be completed, and the others got into a very forward state.

To prevent the entrance from being blocked up by the accumulation of sand, a culvert or tunnel is now constructing which will extend from Woodside Ferry to near the head of Wallasey Pool, where flood-gates are placed to retain the surplus waters of the Birken and the other streams, which drain upwards of eleven thousand acres of land. By means of several cuts from different parts of the culvert, which is 10 feet 6 inches in diameter, an immense body of water may be brought to bear its cleansing power upon the silt.

#### THE DOCK WAREHOUSES

Are situated at the north side of the Docks, and form a street towards Wallasey Pool. Twelve of them are already built, in one block; and many more are in course of erection. They are only two stories high—the first story twenty-one feet in height, and the second about fourteen feet. They extend backwards, from the street, 146 feet, and are 46 feet wide. They are furnished with the requisite tackling and jigger lofts at each end, with four doors for receiving and discharging; and a railway from the Docks with turn tables, extends to each door. The lower floors are asphalted, the roofs are well timbered, and there are patent skylights in the upper rooms. No pains have been spared to render the whole most available for commercial purposes. The brick work (of which the warehouses are chiefly composed) was executed by Messrs. Hilton and Morris, in the most careful and creditable manner. The walls are three feet thick in the lower part, in order that the warehouses may hereafter be raised to any requisite height. The upper floors are supported in each room by two rows of cast iron columns, which, besides giving stability to the buildings, present a handsome appearance.

The Directors of the Chester and Birkenhead Railway Company, considering the interest attached to the opening of the Docks, earnestly pressed upon the Contractors for their extension line, the laying down of a single set of rails from the Grange Lane station to the terminus at the Docks, by the end of March, about which time it was determined to celebrate these events with a series of rejoicings. By the most untiring assiduity and unremitting attention this was accomplished, and the FIFTH OF APRIL, 1847, will ever be memorable in the annals of Birkenhead, as the day upon which these three great undertakings—the Docks, the Warehouses, and the Extension Railway—were formally opened to the public, thus affording a proof how wonder-working is enterprize when directed by men of business, who boldly and zealously resolve to work.

Official announcements of the proposed festivities were widely circulated throughout the country, and the walls of many of the principal towns in the kingdom were covered with placards communicating these intentions; special, as well as cheap, trains were provided from the metropolis, and several of the larger manufacturing towns; and Easter Monday having been felicitously selected for the event, hundreds and thousands of persons availed themselves of their usual holiday on that occasion, to hasten to the shores of the Mersey. In addition to the ordinary mode of advertisement, personal invitations were profusely distributed among Her Majesty's Ministers, the Heads of Departments, Peers, Members of Parliament, Ambassadors, Consuls, the Aristocracy of the County, the Mayors and Municipal Bodies of the surrounding towns, with many of the more eminent Merchants, Manufacturers, and Shipowners.

The appearance of the Steam-packets hastening to the scene of the approaching festivity, with their living freights packed from stem to stern,—the cabin roofs, the paddle-boxes, and every part which could afford standing room, covered with passengers, was strongly suggestive of danger, which happily did not occur, although upwards of sixty thousand persons crossed the river on the occasion.

The "Lord Warden," a Birkenhead built steam-packet of the first-class, having received on board Lord Viscount Morpeth, Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests, the Lords Monteagle, Lincoln, Brackley, and De Lisle, Sir Philip Egerton, Bart., M.P., and several other persons of distinction, entered the Docks, immediately followed by H. M. steamer Redwing, amid the plaudits of the multitude assembled to witness the pleasing occurrence. An elegant *dejeune*, of which about eight hundred persons partook, followed by rustic sports in the Park, and a ball in the Dock

Warehouses, completed the festive arrangements; in which, so far as the greater part of the Inhabitants of Birkenhead were concerned, much less enthusiasm was evinced than might have been anticipated, strangely contrasting with the animation displayed at the commencement of the works. Considerable disappointment was felt at the non-arrival of several vessels destined for the Docks, which were detained by contrary winds; but fortunately the "Oregon" of Glasgow, arriving that morning from Patagonia, the utility of the undertaking was tested by a portion of her cargo, Guano, being discharged from the vessel into waggons upon the railway, and immediately carried, *via* Chester, into the interior of the country. The practical advantages which may be expected from the North Wales Mineral Line were also proved by the shipment of a quantity of Coals, which were conveyed in the same waggons from the collieries near Ruabon to the side of the Lord Warden, and shipped into that vessel in the short space of four hours.

The original estimate of these gigantic undertakings must have been considerably exceeded, as various enlargements of the proposed plans have been adopted. The solid and substantial nature of the works prevents any idea of their being imperfectly executed, but any statement of the expenditure, which has hitherto been incurred, would be useless; it would, as was stated by the engineer to the Government Surveyors, be a "mere affectation of accuracy to say what the works in progress had already cost;" but when completed, the outlay will certainly not have been less than two millions sterling.\* Already, within a month of their being opened, the Docks have received

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\* The order in which the works have been hitherto conducted does not appear to have met the approbation of the Surveying Officers of the Admiralty, who, in their Report, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, find fault with the Commissioners for having turned all their attention to the little Bridge-end or Egerton Dock, which is made *the* dock, instead of proceeding with the 150 acres of float and tidal basin.—"The works," the report states, "are almost suspended, and a passage excavated through the red sandstone, between the Bridge-end Dock and the Woodside Basin, equal in area to its own extent, as a temporary passage. Much valuable time is spent and money expended on this work, the consequences of which were soon felt. The temporary cut is then surrounded with quay walls, furnished with gates, and all the necessary expensive and certainly most substantial masonry. The work is all but completed. When completed, according to the evidence, it will amount to £78,000 expended on this unlegalized work, and, it would appear, up to December last, £263,967 on the whole works. All that has been obtained, since the bill of 1844, is the Bridge-end Dock, of 3½ acres area, with a lock opening into a channel not yet formed, and which cannot be preserved, when formed, without the aid of sluicing from the great float, except at a great expense; and the temporary cut, called the Morpeth Dock, of 3½ acres area, and of such a width that no ordinary sized steamer can wind in it. To sum up all, instead of dock accommodation for some 1,500 vessels, there is provided insufficient accommodation for some fifty or sixty at most, and that partly at the expense of the coasters.

vessels from Asia, Africa, and various parts of Europe, and there have been clearances for the East and West Indies, for America, the Baltic, and the Netherlands.

Although the public had been admitted to the PARK for many months, it was not formally opened until the same day that the Docks were, when that ceremony was performed by the same distinguished persons, Lord Morpeth planting an Oak Tree on the occasion. The expenditure in forming the Park, exclusive of the purchase of the land, has been £76,659 4s., but the value of the surrounding available property belonging to the Commissioners will amount to nearly as much, shewing that the unexampled accommodation afforded to the public, has been acquired at a very trifling outlay of capital.

A portion of the interior has been granted to a party of gentlemen for a Cricket ground, and a Club has recently been formed under distinguished auspices.

At a trifling distance to the westward, the high lands of Bidston and Claughton appear to great advantage; the latter covered with wood forms a rich back ground, in which prominently stand the mansions of William Jackson, Esq., lord of the ancient manor of Claughton, and Marcus F. Brownrigg, Esq.

Various additions, or, perhaps, rather improvements are contemplated in Claughton, which is decidedly one of the best regulated villages in this part of the county; the far greater part of the houses being of a very superior character, either built in regular terraces, or as detached villas surrounded by pleasure grounds. Mr. Jackson has obtained an act of Parliament for the erection of a church, which will be in the Decorated style of English ecclesiastical architecture, and dedicated to St. Andrew. Christ's Church, the splendid fabric building by Mr. Potter, is fast

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The argument used is, that all has been done for the purpose of exhibiting a revenue, so as to be enabled to borrow money to carry out the great works." Mr. Abernethy is of opinion that a more comprehensive plan would have proved more effectual even in enabling the Commissioners to exhibit early revenue. Mr. Abernethy is opposed to the plan of building the walls round Wallasey Pool "in portions as landowners may desire and furnish the means, the rest being supported by timber piling." He thinks the walls should be built "cautiously by the Commissioners as they may from time to time be required." In the end Mr. Abernethy submits the following conclusions:—"That the intended dock, being nearly constructed, at a considerable expense, it is expedient to legalize it; that, if permitted to be used as a passage dock, it should only be for a certain time; on the completion of the entrance from the great tidal basin, it should at once be closed; that, for the present, the construction of the necessary circular basin, and one graving dock at most, should be granted: that no power should be granted to erect a custom-house or other works not absolutely necessary for the accommodation of shipping; that it is expedient to extend the culvert beyond the Woodside Ferry Pier; that after the works before-mentioned, all the monies that can be raised by existing acts, or to be raised under the proposed bill, shall be devoted exclusively to the carrying out of the great and important works of the great float at Wallasey Pool, and tidal basin."



drawing to completion, and by bills, now in Parliament, it is expected that powers will be obtained for the construction of an Infirmary, and a Collegiate Institution.

A THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE has just been established under the patronage of the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Chester, who is the Visitor, and the Rev. Joseph Baylee, Incumbent of Holy Trinity Church, Birkenhead, as Principal. The attainment of theological qualifications is not more the object of the institution than to train candidates for orders in the practical habits of a Minister of the Gospel. For this purpose the students will be connected with the "Liverpool Parochial Assistant Association, and expected to employ three hours a day, for four days in each week, in visiting the district assigned to them, under the direction of the Minister, and also to assist in Sunday school teaching in the district connected with the College."

The College, situated on a pleasing eminence commanding an extensive prospect, consists of four large houses, which, having been built on a uniform plan, were afterwards readily formed into one, and it is provided with every requisite for such an institution.

The expenses are fixed at £50 per annum for Board and Lodging, and Twenty Guineas per annum for Tuition; but, with a view to the encouragement of Missions, the Principal liberally remits the Tuition fees to candidates for Missionary employments; as he also proposes to do to the Sons of Clergymen of small income, in the proportion of one to every five students who pay the full stipend.

St. John's Church, now nearly completed, exhibits an addition to the original design, by the construction of a clerestory, which, rising considerably above the roof of the aisles, and lighted by triangular windows, adds much to the general effect. The chancel, which is raised three steps, has been floored with encaustic tiles of an antique pattern. An organ, by Mr. Jackson of Bolton, one of the largest and most complete instruments ever finished by a provincial builder, has been erected in the gallery over the principal entrance. The aisles are lighted by long narrow lancet-headed windows, filled in with mellow-tinted glass and stained foliage border. The triplet window near the altar contains figures of St. John, St. Peter, and St. Paul, upon appropriately covered ground, and above is a circular or rose window, richly embellished, with the emblem of the dove in the centre. The transept windows were presented by Mr. James A. Forest of Liverpool, who has been eminently successful in executing the whole of the stained glass work throughout the church, in a manner strictly accordant with its architecture.

An Institution, entitled the BIRKENHEAD HOMŒOPATHIC DISPENSARY, is so rapidly advancing in public estimation, "that it seems probable it will ere long afford relief to a greater number of patients than any other in the town. In 1846, no less than 780 applications were made at the house used as a temporary hospital; the finances being so low that the committee have hitherto been unable to provide a medical assistant to visit the poor at their own residences. "The institution is open without any restrictions to the public, who may there receive the valuable and unremitting attentions of the physicians, whose services are of a nature which the committee cannot in any way recompense, but which the suffering and afflicted fully appreciate." *See Rep.* 1846.

Pleasing as it would have been to have been enabled to add to the Institutions for Religious, Charitable, and Literary purposes previously noticed, circumstances rather difficult to explain, have prevented the erection of several long-promised edifices. Notwithstanding the almost proverbial rapidity for which Birkenhead is celebrated, an interruption and delay greater than any which had previously arrested the onward progress of the town, took place in the spring and summer of 1846, in the erection of several public works, occasioned by disputes between the master tradesmen and their workmen, relative to wages. Every description of mechanics and labourers connected with building suddenly demanded an advance, and although a satisfactory arrangement was soon made with several minor trades, many months elapsed before an adjustment took place with the most numerous, and as it appeared, the most influential class,—the stonemasons. During that long period the building of the churches was suspended, and several projects abandoned, to the great injury of the town, and the still greater punishment of the workmen, whose temporary triumph in obtaining a portion of the advance they required, was purchased by the infliction of a heavy pecuniary loss on themselves and their families. Circumstances also connected with the Railway speculations of the preceding year induced the projectors of several schemes in this neighbourhood to gladly avail themselves of the opportunity thus afforded to abandon contracts, the engagements of which they would have found it difficult to meet. The township has also suffered from a difference among parties, who for years had been actively engaged in promoting the general interests of Birkenhead; a difference which has occasioned the retirement from the direction of its affairs, of several by whose wealth, extended connections, decision of character, skilful and attentive management,

and incessant devotion to its welfare, the town had been raised to the situation it held at the commencement of 1846.

But whatever may have been the cause of the serious drawback on the township during the last year, it has been severely felt by all classes; buildings have been nearly suspended, property of every description has been much depreciated in value, and as a natural consequence the tide of immigration has been stopped, and numbers of mechanics have left the town. When the Docks were commenced, the subject of an Infirmary was strongly urged, and large sums of money amounting to upwards of four thousand pounds were *said* to be subscribed; again, in February 1845, the Commissioners recommended that plots of land should be granted for the erection of a Collegiate Institution and Hospital; but hitherto the proceedings have been confined to the inserting of clauses granting land for these purposes, in a "Sanatory Bill" now before Parliament, but which will most probably be withdrawn.

Two Bills have been introduced into Parliament to oblige the Birkenhead and Claughton Gas and Water Company to sell their interest in those works to the Commissioners of Birkenhead; but the evidence given before the Surveying Officers upon the preliminary inquiries is so decidedly opposed to such a measure, and the official report of those gentlemen so unfavourable, that it is not probable the promoters of the Bills will persevere with them; and the general bills announced by Her Majesty's Ministers will most likely supersede the alleged necessity of these, to which the vast majority of the inhabitants are decidedly hostile.

The attentive observer in Birkenhead cannot fail to notice the disposition which exists to carry the improvements of the town in a north and north-west direction, where land has been reserved for a court-house, town-hall, and public offices. The large masses of houses and shops which remain unoccupied, would lead to the opinion that it will be long before the trade of the town is concentrated in that quarter, notwithstanding the advantages which may be derived from its vicinity to the Docks. It is, however, difficult to predict concerning the future condition of Birkenhead: the events of the next few years may effect a great alteration in the town, which is at present beyond, all doubt, in a state of great depression. From the evidence given before the Surveying Officers, appointed by the Woods and Forests in January last, on the Gas and Water Bills, and which evidence resulted from a personal examination of every building in the town, it appeared there were 2,702 occupied houses; and no less

than 893 uninhabited, exclusive of 444 unfinished. The rental of these will be shewn by the following table, which was made up to the 1st January, 1847, since which the number of the uninhabited houses of the smaller class has increased; on the other hand there has been an increase in the occupation of the larger and better description. Notices have been given to the Town Surveyor for the commencement of fifty-one dwellings during the last six months.

TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBER AND RENTAL OF THE HOUSES IN BIRKENHEAD.

31st December, 1846.

Rental	£5 to 10	10 to 15	15 to 20	20 to 30	30 to 40	40 to 50	50 to 60	60 to 70	70 to 80	80 to 90	90 to 100	100 to 110	110 to 120	120 to 130	130 to 140	140 to 150	150 to 160	160 to 200	200 to 300	300 to 350	350	Total Houses
Occupied.	222	597	496	545	318	166	129	75	29	43	19	35	4	7	5	4	1	5	2	1		2702
Unoccu- pied.	24	429	49	180	107	62	33	17	6	2	4	7	1	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	893

Of these, 418 are shops, and 2994 dwelling houses; there are also 46 occupied as hotels or public-houses, and 137 as beer-houses.

With so great a portion of the Town uninhabited, and consequently with a property so costly, if not so valuable, unproductive, it is evident that Birkenhead cannot be in a prosperous condition; and the present general prostration of the monetary system, adding to the local depression, has tended to darken the aspect which its financial affairs at present exhibit.

A "Summary of the Accounts of the Commissioners," for the year ending the 22nd April, 1845, has already been given at page 389, whereby it would appear that their liabilities then were £313,203 4s., but no statement of their property or assets has been published since April, 1844;—a circumstance by no means leading to any opinion favourable to their prosperity.

*General Statement of the Commissioners of Birkenhead for the year 1845-6.*

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To Cash for Improvement Rate	1,502	2	8½	By Cash paid for Highways, &c.	10,731	6	2
„ Lighting and Watching				„ Lighting and Watching	4,301	13	5
„ Rate .....	2,109	17	6½	(Including Night Scavengers.)			
„ Market and Abattoir ...	1,020	17	10	„ Market, &c. ....	923	8	9
„ Land sold .....	20,850	6	6	„ Land bought .....	1,873	11	1
„ Rent .....	175	16	0				
„ Interest from Ferry &c.	4,303	8	0	„ Interest .....	11,863	16	8
„ Received on Loan .....	56,607	7	3	„ New Streets .....	8,299	7	10
				„ General Property Acct.	45,808	4	9½
				„ General Salaries .....	1,275	8	5
				„ General Charges .....	640	4	3
				„ Town-hall establishmnt	327	3	2
				„ Income Tax .....	360	0	2
To Balance from last year .....	91	9	9½	By Balance to 1846-7 .....	257	0	11½
	£86,661	5	8		£86,661	5	8

The liabilities of the township during the year 1846 were increased to £376,512 15s. 11d. During the same period, the receipts at the Woodside and Monks' Ferries were, for contract passengers £2030 16s. 2d., casual ditto £19,715 4s. 3d., for freights, &c. £2397 3s. 8d., making a total of £24,143 4s. 1d. The expenditure was, in repairs £1822 14s., in wages £6154 1s. 11d., for coals £2085 4s. 6d., and for hire of vessels, salaries, and sundry incidental expenses £3235 2s. 11d., leaving an apparent profit of £10,846 0s. 9d.; out of which the Commissioners received £3879 19s. for *rent*, (which is included in their statement under the head of "interest"), and the residue was appropriated to new boats.\*

\* According to the Account furnished when before the Government Surveying Officers,—but which differs in some respects from that printed by the Commissioners in February, 1847.

*General Statement of the Commissioners of Birkenhead for the year 1846-7.*

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To Cash for Improvement Rate	3,139	6	5½	By Cash paid for Highways, &c.	5,397	2	3
„ Lighting and Watching				„ Lighting and Watching	4,999	15	2
Rate .....	3,001	0	3	(Including Night Scavengers.)			
„ Market and Abattoir...	849	9	11	„ Market.....	1,341	0	9
„ New Streets .....	8,056	17	1	„ New Streets .....	7,512	16	11
„ Lands sold.....	1,669	8	3	„ Lands bought .....	565	1	1
„ Interest <i>including Ferry</i>	4,248	6	0	„ Interest .....	16,384	4	11
„ Rent .....	229	17	4	„ Forming Park.....	10,843	16	11
„ Received on Loan.....	36,920	9	6	„ Parliamentary Expenses	2,421	0	3
				„ Redemption of Land Tax	508	3	8
				„ Income Tax.....	381	7	1
				„ General Salaries.....	1,265	3	9
				„ General Charges.....	2,062	6	4
				„ Town-hall establishment	457	13	4
To Balance from previous year	257	0	11½	By Balance to 1847-8 .....	4,232	3	4
	£58,371	15	9		£58,371	15	9

. The Improvement Rate in this year—1846-7,—was levied at one shilling in the pound, and the Lighting and Watching Rate at the same, on a nominal rental of £114,348 per annum; but it was soon found, from so many houses being unoccupied, that not more than two thirds of the assessment could be made available, although there does not appear to have been any correspondent reduction in the expenditure. The Rate for the year 1847-8 has been laid at one shilling in the pound, upon the nominal rental of 112,044; but as property amounting to £32,716 is unoccupied, the Rate will not produce more than £3900. The Watching and Lighting Rate is also laid at one shilling in the pound.

The total liabilities of the Town were, on the 31st May, 1847, certified by the Chairman of the Finance Committee, as being £416,832 9s. 6d., though the acts of Parliament under which the Commissioners are appointed expressly limit the power to borrow to £400,000. The value of the assets of the Town has not been announced for several years; but in the evidence given before the Surveying Officers, when making the preliminary inquiries on the Gas and Water Bills in January last, it was stated to be £598,317. The accuracy of several of the estimates, upon which this valuation was

made, was disputed, but enough appeared to justify the solvency of the Town under proper management; while any improvement in the demand for building land would enable the Commissioners to reduce their liabilities by the sale of their disposable property. The completion of the Park will diminish the expenditure, as during the last few years it has formed an item, varying from £10,000 to £30,000 per annum, which will not again occur. And from the Market, some income ought certainly to be expected, for it cost, exclusive of the land on which it stands, £28,200; and yet hitherto it has not produced enough to pay its annual expenses.

The Ferry also is, or ought to be, a source of considerable revenue to the Town. In the year ending 22nd April, 1847, the receipts were:

From Annual Contractors.....	£2027	10	6	
„ Daily Passengers.....	19,063	5	2	
„ Freight of Goods.....	1352	2	0	
„ Rents, Weighing Machine, &c. ....	171	15	6	22,614 13 2
From previous Balance .....				1,552 19 6
				<hr/>
				£24,167 12 8

And the Payments in the same year were: for Coals .....	£2287	18	2	
Wages.....	5954	10	9	
Ditto, Monks' Ferry .....	1481	13	7	
Repairs of Boats .....	2585	7	6	
Ditto of Piers .....	402	2	4	
New Boats.....	4626	6	8	
Miscellaneous.....	1698	2	2	
Hire of Vessels.....	597	0	0	
Salaries .....	442	9	1	
Cash paid to the Commissioners .....	3879	19	0	
Balance in hand, 22nd April, 1847 .....	212	3	5	£24,167 12 8

The total expenditure on the working of the Ferry, as above, was £15,449 3s. 7d., and the actual receipts being £22,614 13s. 2d. shows a profit of £7165 9s. 7d. which would, of course, be reduced by any payment on account of either rent or interest upon the purchase of the Ferry.

When the Ferry was first purchased for the Town it was expected that its profits would greatly reduce the general rates, but it will be seen that with the exception of £3879 19s. paid to the Commissioners,—which appears in their accounts under the

head of "interest,"—there is an excess of only about £3300, and the purchase of a steam-packet and a lighter has absorbed £4626 6s. 8d. But being now furnished with an excellent fleet of eight packets, beside three lighters, all in perfect order, it may be reasonably anticipated that a greater amount of money will henceforth be appropriated to Township purposes. A suggestion was recently made to reduce the rate for casual passengers to one penny; it would be difficult in the present state of affairs to believe that such a proposition can be seriously maintained; it would at once strike off £10,000 per annum, from the receipts of a concern yielding, at present, only about £7000 per annum. The great increase in the equipment at the Woodside and the Monks' Ferries has been met by correspondent exertions on the part of the Lessees of the Birkenhead Royal Mail Ferry, where Messrs. Edward G. and S. Willoughby have five packets now employed, of which two, the "Britannia" and the "Birkenhead," recently launched, are considered the swiftest craft on the river. By these additions to the Ferry establishments, and by a large floating stage,—resembling a vessel of 515 feet in length, and 80 in breadth,—which has been moored opposite the George's Dock, Liverpool, the communication between the opposite shores of the Mersey has been greatly facilitated, and the packets now run every quarter of an hour.

It is not requisite here to enter into the various causes which have gradually led to a change of feeling, on the part of the great majority of the inhabitants of Birkenhead towards the Commissioners. A minute examination of their accounts would, indeed, render such a detail unnecessary; but their unceasing perseverance in endeavouring, contrary to the almost unanimous wish of the Ratepayers, to obtain Acts of Parliament for the compulsory purchase of the Gas and Water Works from the present proprietors, may be considered as the principal cause of dissatisfaction at their conduct. But it was not until the annual election for one-third of their number, which took place on the 1st June, that an opportunity occurred of legally recording that opinion. On that day, the "House List," as it may be termed, including every Candidate put in nomination by the old Commissioners, was rejected, the opposition list being carried by majorities of about three to one. At their subsequent meetings the Commissioners have shown a better feeling of unanimity than had previously been displayed; their various working Committees appear to have been fairly chosen, and the fusion of parties, will, it is to be hoped, lead to a revival of the prosperity of the Town, and an improvement in its



financial affairs, satisfactorily solving Albert Smith's problem, "that the entire colony has the appearance of being certain to prove either the greatest hit, or the grandest failure on record."

No statement of the pecuniary affairs of the Birkenhead Dock Commissioners, or of the Dock (Warehouse) Company, has ever been published;\* but it has for some time been evident, notwithstanding the apparent activity with which the works have been prosecuted, that the finances of those bodies were not in a very flourishing condition. The recent alteration in the Commissioners, who are *ex officio* Directors of the Dock and Harbour Trust, leading to a correspondent change in the Board of Management, it was soon discovered that large sums of money had been lent, by their predecessors, to the Dock (Warehouse) Company, which the latter were unable, or at all events unwilling, to refund, although such a repayment was essential until a more comprehensive measure of relief could be obtained. Repeated applications to the Crown for aid, were equally unsuccessful; for although the Woods and Forests were willing, upon having the surveillance of the works, and the control of the expenditure of the funds placed in their hands, to grant a loan, it was ultimately found there was no money in the Exchequer available for such a purpose. Nor had the Dock Commissioners even the prospect, however remote, of any available property; for although when the Dock scheme was originally started, it was contemplated that a great portion of the cost of the works would be defrayed by the sale of the land recovered from the Pool, it was subsequently found that the Crown claimed it. Mr. Price, the then reputed lord of the manor, was also a claimant for the right of shore; but he agreed with the Commissioners to arrange his demands by arbitration.

Two bills introduced by the Commissioners, were not opposed during their progress through the Commons, but in the Lords they were met by petitions from Mr. Price, from several persons owning land on the margin of Wallasey Pool, from the Corporation of Liverpool, and even from the Birkenhead Dock Company, disputing the right of the Crown to the strand, or foreshore of the Docks already constructed, and those intended. The effect of this opposition has been the insertion of words which tend to invalidate the presumed title of the Crown, and the point will have to be decided in a Court of Law. It is stated by some, that the demand was not made with

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\* Nor have they been deposited with the Clerk of the Peace of the County of Chester, as required by the 37th and 66th sections of their respective Acts.

any *bona fide* intention,—with either hope, or expectation of success,—but with a view to impede the progress of the Works; and if such were the object of the petitioners, it has been effectually attained. Hundreds of men having been dismissed, and the Commissioners having adopted a resolution that the Trust will not expend further sums upon, or use the Docks or Works, until the title is secured, the Works are in a great measure suspended. It has also been intimated to the Contractors for the Extension Line of Railway to the Docks, that they may take another year for its completion.

From subsequent events it transpired, that the Woods and Forests objected to these Bills being passed without the insertion of clauses to prevent the prosecution of the Works, until security was given for the refunding of the money which has been misapplied in loans; and also to enforce the completion of the outer works within three years. The knowledge of these requirements caused great excitement in the town, the prevailing opinion being that the points in dispute could not be arranged previously to the dissolution; and petitions were sent to the House of Lords, and to the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, praying that the Bills might pass. At length, on the last day of the session, the Royal Assent was obtained. But the new Acts contain clauses authorizing the borrowing of £400,000, but suspending the further construction of the works—and even the use of the narrow cut, or outward basin, by vessels of upwards of 200 tons,—until the loans be repaid. There is, however, an alternative clause, by which the Woods and Forests may allow the works to be resumed, when a portion of the money has been refunded; a measure which, although not compulsory upon that Board, may be of great service to the Town, for in the present state of their affairs, it would be very difficult for the Commissioners to comply with these stipulations, from inability to obtain further loans; and the completion of the outer works alone will require £150,000, and the entire works nearly £600,000.

The re-payment of the Money lent by the Commissioners, would enable them to finish two-thirds of the outward Works; and when the numbers of the shareholders in the Dock Warehouse Company—whose wealth and whose standing place them beyond suspicion—is considered, together with the fact that only £35 out of the £100, the nominal value of each share, has been paid up, the payment of their portion of the debt ought not to be long delayed.

In no point of view have the Township Commissioners a pleasing, or an easy duty before them. With one-third of the town uninhabited and unproductive; burthened with an establishment, in many parts, at once uselessly expensive and singularly inefficient; with a losing Market, and decreasing receipts at the Ferry, their current expenses actually require a larger sum than they have power to levy; and, exclusively of these, which must be met, they have to meet an annual charge, for interest alone, of more than double their total revenue; and, so far as loans are concerned, they have already obtained £16,000 to £20,000 more than they have legally power to borrow. Yet no cause for despondency exists; for although recent circumstances have caused a great sensation in the town, the alarm which has been excited far exceeds the necessity of the case. It may have been wrong in the Dock Commissioners to have lent so much money, either to the Town Commissioners, or to the Dock Company; but that money has not been wasted, it has not been unprofitably spent; and though the inability to repay it may cause disappointment and delay,—the latter always prejudicial,—the money has assumed the form of value, in public works, which ultimately must become available, and therefore, must be advantageous to the community at large.

The liabilities may be speedily reduced by a sale of a portion of their lands, valuable, but at present unproductive. A close investigation into their establishment will show, that by more rigid economy, a considerable diminution in their expenses may be effected; while an alteration in the management of some branches of their revenue, would considerably enhance the amounts, which ought to be derived from their present great sources of supply.

It cannot be denied that there has been too great, too rapid an influx into Birkenhead, which, until it can earn money of its own, from imports or manufactures, or from both, must be considered as a suburb to Liverpool, and a place of residence for those whose means of living are drawn from that great Town. Though the expansion has been too sudden, it can hardly be called misplaced, and the difficulties by which Birkenhead is at present surrounded may yet by firmness be overcome. Some few may—some are leaving the neighbourhood; but the great bulk of the inhabitants, aware of the desire of Government to witness the completion of the great national works connected with the harbour, are confident the Crown will defend and protect the title to lands, upon the security of which it is willing to afford pecuniary aid and assistance, thereby enabling the trading accommodation of the town to be perfected,

and a profitable opening provided for the trading energies of a numerous and industrious population.

Arrangements are now making for the sale of a large portion of the surplus Park lands to a Joint-Stock Company, upon terms which appear advantageous to the purchasers, and which will materially assist the finances of the Commissioners.

The Railway arrangements, so far as regards legislative enactments, are now complete. The Chester and Birkenhead Company has been incorporated with the Birkenhead, Lancashire and Cheshire Junction Company; and Parliament has sanctioned certain deviations in the line of the latter, whereby some improvements have been effected. Arrangements have also been made with the North-Western Company, by which the better and more amicable working of the lines has been secured; and a large Station is constructing at Chester, at the joint expense of the two Companies, and of the lines running into Wales. An Act of Parliament has also been obtained for a Railroad from Parkgate,—on the shores of the Dee,—to join the line between Birkenhead and Chester at Hooton. The Chester and Holyhead Company propose to open their line from Chester to Bangor in October next, and the entire line, except the Menai Bridge, next spring.

Birkenhead, in common with several of the Western Ports of England, suffered from the late alarming influx of paupers from Ireland,—which commenced about November, 1846. Numbers, immediately after their arrival in Liverpool, crossed the Mersey to Birkenhead; some on the pretence of seeking employment, others of travelling into the interior, but, in almost every instance, with an intention to beg. Proceeding direct from the ferries to the parish offices, their numbers\* — principally women and children—were so great, their applications for food so urgent, and their destitution so apparent, that the ordinary laws of vagrancy were suspended, or rather defeated. In the first quarter of the year no less than upwards of two thousand who applied for assistance, generally at an advanced period of the day, were obliged to be provided with lodgings previously to their removal; and the

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\* Between the 13th November, 1846, and the 13th of May following, 196,338 persons landed in Liverpool from Ireland in a state of destitution; of these, during that period, 41,180 emigrated, principally to the United States and Canada.

state of the hovels, into which the unfortunate creatures were placed, made the want of a house of refuge, or night-asylum, for casual and houseless poor, very apparent. The parochial authorities took a temporary Fever Hospital, and other means were adopted, to arrest the spread of that sickness, which might otherwise have been anticipated as the summer approached from a continuance of the poverty and disease which was so largely imported during the spring from Ireland.

The inconvenient and expensive Court of the Hundred, which for so long a period was held at Neston, (*see* p. 156) has been superseded by the "County Court" lately established for the recovery of all debts and demands not exceeding £20. The Court for the District of Birkenhead, comprising nearly the whole of Wirral, and forming part of the West Cheshire Circuit, appears to give much satisfaction, and the great utility of the measure is shewn by the fact that upwards of four hundred causes have been disposed of, in each month, since the Court was established. In addition to the duties imposed upon the Judges of County Courts, the jurisdiction of the Commissioners of Bankruptcy so far as Insolvency as distinguished from bankruptcy is concerned, and of the Commissioners for the Relief of Insolvent Debtors on Circuit, has been transferred, by the act 10 and 11 VICTORIA, cap. cii., to the Judges of the County Courts, from and after the 15th of September, 1847. This transfer will occasion a great increase in the duties of the West Cheshire Circuit Court, of which John William Harden, Esq. of the Inner Temple, is the Judge.

The Gas and Water Bills, upon which the sense of the Town had been so decidedly expressed, were, at the first meeting of the Commissioners after the annual election, ordered to be withdrawn; immediately after they were abandoned, the Proprietors of the Company made an alteration in the price of Water, assimilating it to the rate chargeable in Liverpool. It has since been ascertained that some time previously to the withdrawal of the Bills being announced by the promoters, an intimation had been given to them, that the measure could not pass the Peers. The Chairman of the Committees of the Lords appears to entertain an opinion that the legislative enactments relative to Birkenhead are so numerous, and in some parts so contradictory, that no more Bills for the improvement of the Town should become law, until all the existing acts are consolidated into one measure. The Sanatory Bill was consequently withdrawn, and the Collegiate Institution, the Infirmary, and several other projects

are therefore suspended for the present. Although these three Bills had not even got before a Committee of the Commons, the expenses upon them will, it is estimated, amount to £3000.

A considerable addition was made to the List of Parliamentary Voters for the Southern Division of Cheshire at the last Court of Revision, when the number remaining on the Register as qualified for Townships in the Western Division of Wirral, was settled at 1997. These have to vote at Birkenhead, in which Town alone there was an increase of 487 on the last register, principally through the exertions of the Anti-Corn-Law League, several hundred freeholds having been purchased to promote the Free-Trade movement. The general election, which has just terminated, has not however, produced any change in the representation of this Division of the County, the former Members having been re-elected. But it may not be improper in concluding this protracted description of Birkenhead, to mention that William Jackson, Esq.,—whose name has so frequently been referred to, as one of the principal instruments in raising the Town from its former insignificance, to its present importance,—has been returned for the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme. This event has highly gratified his numerous friends in Birkenhead, who anticipate that much advantage will accrue to the town, from the extended sphere thereby presented to him for the advancement of its prosperity.

The financial affairs of the Town, and more especially those connected with the Docks and harbour, continue to excite considerable uneasiness. The half-yearly general meeting of the Birkenhead Dock Company, held 18th August, 1847, was attended by several of the great capitalists who are shareholders; and the present condition and future prospects of the Company were freely discussed. The general opinion formed, from a perusal of the various documents, seems to be that the Birkenhead Dock *Commissioners* will not be enabled to carry out those works upon which the Dock *Company* must depend. The directors regretted that they had “been obliged to postpone payment of interest to the proprietors. Nothing but the necessity of providing for the liabilities of the Company would have induced them to have taken such a step;” and as “the operations of the acts which were obtained during the last session, are partially suspended till certain moneys are repaid,” and as they are

“unable to raise money on the bonds of the Company, they have consequently been obliged to press hard upon their shareholders. The liabilities of the Company must be met and calls made and enforced. A further call has been ordered, as the directors cannot hold out any hopes of being able to relax this course of proceeding.” The price of the £100 shares, upon which £60 has been paid, is now £20, or £40 per share discount; and they will probably recede a little more. The liabilities of the Dock Company were stated at £981,647, and their assets at £1,024,990; including, however, a large tract—upwards of half a million of yards—of land at present unavailable, and also the Herculaneum Dock in Liverpool, which, with some adjacent land, has cost the Company about £200,000.

A feeling prevails with many that the Birkenhead Docks were undertaken in opposition to the interests of Liverpool, an idea than which nothing can be more absurd. Birkenhead must always be considered as a dependency, or rather as a component part, of Liverpool; it is by the traffic of the one, that the docks of the other must be filled. Men, therefore, who divest themselves of partial prejudices can at once appreciate the value of increased and cheap accommodation, and they will clearly anticipate and fully estimate the future worth of these magnificent projects, and their importance in aiding Liverpool to maintain her commercial supremacy; and while Liverpool is thus benefited, the advantage will be extended to surrounding districts, and to none more than to the opposite shores of the Mersey, and the entire peninsula of the HUNDRED OF WIRRAL.

# APPENDIX.

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## DOOMSDAY SURVEY.

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DOMESDAY BOOK, from which alone we now derive our knowledge of the possessors of the fair lands of England, after the Norman Conqueror had apportioned them among his followers, was compiled on the model of the survey made by Alfred, and generally called the Book of Winchester. The motives of William in causing this invaluable record to be made have already been noticed. It presents an exact description of the manner in which the lands and towns were held, the quantity of land in each village, district, and hundred, the state and condition in which it was, whether in meadow, arable, or wood, the name of the proprietor, often of the tenant, the number and apportionment of the freemen, villagers, and slaves, the value at the time of the survey being made, and also that at which it had been estimated in the reign of King Edward the Confessor.

To procure this information commissioners were appointed, who visited every place of any importance in the kingdom. They summoned the Norman Barons to show the precise limits of their respective possessions, and the territorial jurisdiction they assumed. Juries in each hundred, consisting equally of Saxons and of Normans, were impanelled to examine into these statements, to ascertain the value of the estates, and to verify by their oaths the returns required from the commissions.\* The result of their labours was collected into two volumes, which have borne the several names of Liber Regis, Liber Vintonice, Liber Judiciarius. Bishop Kennet, in his Parochial Antiquities, states the name to have been **Dom=bot**, of which Domesday Book is only a corruption. **Dom=Bot** was, undoubtedly, the name given to the code of Saxon laws made by Alfred. By the Saxons it was called the Domesday Book, or Book of the Last Judgment, perhaps, as M. Thierry observes in his history of the Norman Conquest, because it contained the irrevocable sentence of the alienation of their estates. The exact date of the commencement of the survey is unknown. It is generally supposed to have occupied the commissioners for six years, and from a note at the end of the second volume it appears to have been completed in the twentieth year of the reign of William.

These original Books were preserved at Winchester for many years previously to their removal to

\* "Omnes Franci et Angli de hundredo juraverunt," is appended to each return.



Westminster, where they lay at the "Tally Office belonging to the custody of the Treasurer, Auditor, and Chamberlain of the Exchequer" until 1696, when they were deposited in the Chapter-house. Though the subject of such frequent reference, Domesday Book remained unpublished until 1800, when it was ordered to be printed for the use of both Houses of Parliament, and the public institutions, under the immediate inspection of the "Royal Record Commissioners," whose introduction will be found as interesting as the work itself is dull and tedious. Domesday Book is, however, defective: Durham, Northumberland, Cumberland, and Westmoreland, together with a part of Yorkshire, are omitted; and there are numerous omissions of properties not being part of the desmesnes of the King or his tenants in chief. The desolation in which the northern counties were at that time involved, may probably have been the cause of the commissioners not visiting them, or not reporting the result of their inquiries.\*

The King was the greatest landed proprietor. Notwithstanding the professions of liberality that he made to his followers, he retained in his own hands 1432 manors. The tenants in chief amounted to about seven hundred, in almost every instance Normans, or the heads of religious houses; for churches and monasteries were in most instances not despoiled; on the contrary, in some instances, considerable additions were made by the Conqueror to their revenues. As the description of the persons, and the terms of the measurement of the lands referred to in the Survey, are not of frequent occurrence, a few remarks upon them may not be inappropriate.

One of the words most frequently used is Hida, which antiquaries have generally agreed to be synonymous with Carucata, Hida being the Saxon, and Caracuta the Norman appellation of a certain quantity of land. The difference, however, is so material, that no ingenuity of argument can possibly reconcile them to the same standard. Hida ought rather to be considered as the valuation, than as the dimension of the estate, and Caracuta is undoubtedly the measurement of the land. As the modern land tax is spoken of at so many shillings in the pound, so formerly the old *Dane-geld*, which was also a land tax more ancient than the time of the Confessor, was an assessment of so many shillings by the hide. Perhaps the most correct definition of a Hida of land would be such a quantity as might annually be worth twenty Norman shillings; and as the value depended on the quality of the land, it would consist of a greater or less number of acres, according to the poverty or the fertility of the soil.

The Carucata Carve, or Ploughland—the latter a term yet in use in many parts of the kingdom—is also an uncertain quantity, differing not only in various counties, but often in various parts of the same county. In some parishes it is no more than one hundred acres, in others one hundred and forty. The average of one hundred and twenty acres is generally taken.

A Virgate or Yard Land contains from twenty-five to thirty-five acres—four of them constituting one carucate.

\* Perhaps the good Remi of Fescamps, who, for his contribution of a ship and twenty men at arms, had been made Bishop of Lincoln, (see page 26,) and the other ecclesiastics and judges that formed the Norman commission, had some apprehensions, if they held their assize or inquest in the townships of Northumbria, those Saxon words, *þæt þe ræd, goda ræd, sles ge the bishoppes*, which had been the signal for the massacre of their brother bishop, Vaulcher, and his hundred men, would be rung in their ears.—See Mat. Paris, I. p. 10.

The Ofgang or Bovata is equally uncertain, being half of the virgate, and one-eighth of the carucate. It was applied to as much land as one pair of oxen would keep in husbandry.

The distinction in Domesday between meadow and pasture land is, that meadow is appropriated to those grass lands that were mowed, and pasture to those on which cattle were fed.

The Quarantena is a furlong, twelve of which compose a Leuca—very nearly a mile and a half.

The Lord of the Manor kept the dominium or desmesne in his own hands. It was worked by the *servi*, or servants, who were considered as forming a portion of the manor, and disposable with it. The *villani*, who were the originals of our present copyholders, held their lands by doing service on the desmesnes of their lord, which services were afterwards commuted to quit rents. The term villager is perhaps more suitable to the ideas of the present day than the strict translation of the word *villani*, which occurs in every page, villain, would be. The *Bordarii* were cottagers, or holders of small portions of land by services not precisely known. They are supposed to have been under an obligation to supply their lords with some sort of provisions, as eggs, poultry, &c.

*Coliberti* were persons who had been freed from their servitude by their lords on certain conditions that distinguished them from the *Liberi*, or real freemen.

At the time of the Conquest all that part of Lancashire that is situated between the Ribble and the Mersey, and all Wales, from Chester to the river Clwyd, then called the Hundred of Atiscross, were considered in Cheshire, and as such appear in the survey. The names of several parishes in the Hundred of Wirral are omitted, but the following is a correct translation of all that part of the Greater Domesday Book, now in the Chapter-house, that relates to this Hundred and to the city of Chester. The several townships are taken in the order in which they stand in the original, and it is presumed they were placed in that succession to show the possessions of each holder at one view.

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The City of Chester, in the time of King Edward, (the Confessor,) was gildable or assessable at fifty hides, three hides and a half of which were without the city—namely, one hide and a half beyond the bridge, and two hides in Newton and Redclive, and within the burgh (or close or precincts) of the Bishop, but were assessed with the city. At that time there were in the city four hundred and thirty-one assessable houses, besides which the Bishop had fifty-six. The city *then* paid ten marks and a half of silver, two parts of which belonged to the King, and a third to the Earl (of Chester;)—and these were the laws there:—

The law, or peace, was administered by the hand of the King, or by his writ, or by his lieutenant. If it should be broken by any, the King had thereupon one hundred shillings; but if the King's peace, when administered by the Earl, was infringed, the Earl was intitled to the third penny out of the hundred shillings so paid. If the peace had been broken by the King's steward, (*præpositus*,) or the Earl's officer, he was fined forty shillings, and the third penny belonged to the Earl.

If any freeman broke the peace of the King by slaying a man in his house, all his lands and money were forfeited to the King, and he became an outlaw (*utlagh*.) If any of the Earl's men did the same,

he forfeited the like, and was outlawed ; and to such outlaw no one was able to restore the peace (or permit his return) except the King.

Whoever drew blood between the morning of the Monday and the noon of the Sabbath, paid a fine of ten shillings ; but from noon of the Sabbath to the morning of the Monday, if he so drew blood, he was fined twenty shillings. And also twenty shillings was to be paid by whoever drew blood in the twelve days of the Nativity, or on the day of the Purification of the blessed Virgin, or on the first day of Easter, or the first day of Whitsuntide, or on the day of the Holy Ascension, or on the day of the Assumption or Nativity of the Holy Mary, or on the day of the Feast of All Saints.

He who on any of these sacred days did slay a man, paid a fine of four pounds ; but on other days forty shillings only.

Likewise, he who on any of these days did commit *hetufar*, (that is, taking a servant away from, or causing the loss of a servant to, his master,) or *forestel*, (buying corn or provisions before they reach the market,) forfeited four pounds ; but on other days, forty shillings.

Any person committing *hangenuitha*, (that is, executing a felon without trial,) forfeited ten shillings ; but the King's or the Earl's bailiff committing this offence, was fined twenty shillings.

He who committed robbery, or caused tumult, or offered violence to a woman in a house, did for each offence forfeit forty shillings.

A widow, if she cohabited unlawfully with any one, paid a fine of twenty shillings ; an unmarried woman, for the same offence, paid ten shillings.

He who took or held the lands of another, and could not prove that they were his own, forfeited forty shillings ; and so did he who laid claim to such land, and could not justify his demand.

He that wished to free or relieve his own land, or that of his neighbour, paid ten shillings ; but if he were not able or willing to pay such ten shillings, the land passed to the King.\*

He who did not pay all tax, rent, or custom due from him, at the proper time, was fined ten shillings.

Any citizen in whose house a fire broke out, was fined three *oras*,† and he had moreover to pay to his next neighbour two shillings.

Of all these forfeitures two parts belonged to the King, and the third to the Earl.

If ships came to the harbour of the city, or departed therefrom, without the King's license, the King and the Earl were entitled to a penalty of forty shillings for each man on board.

If against the peace of the King, and contrary to his proclamation, any ship arrived, such vessel, together with all her cargo and the crew, was forfeited to the Earl and the King. But if any ship came peaceably and with the license of the King, the cargo might be sold without any interruption on payment of fourpence for each last (*lesth*.) If any such ships brought martin skins, the King's officers were to have the first offer of them, and if this were not done, their owner was to forfeit forty shillings.

\* " Every new inheritor paid a sum of money, under the name of a relief to his lord, on the investiture."

† About five shillings, an *ora* varying from sixteen to twenty pence.

If any man or woman were found guilty of giving false measure in the city, they forfeited four shillings, and if any such did make bad beer, they shall either be placed on a tumbil,\* or were fined four shillings.

The officers of the King and the Earl received these forfeitures, whether they were incurred in the lands of the Bishop or any other person, and if any withheld payment for more than three nights, he forfeited forty shillings.

In the time of King Edward there were seven mint masters in the city, who gave to the King and the Earl, in addition to the farm rent, £7, as the money was coined.

There were then twelve magistrates in the city, who were chosen from among the men of the King, and those of the Bishop and the Earl; if any of them kept away from the Hundred Court (~~Hundred~~) when they sat without good reason, he was fined ten shillings.

When, for the purpose of repairing or rebuilding the wall or the bridge of the city, the proper officers commanded that one man be furnished from each hide, the lord of such man as did not attend was fined forty shillings to the King and the Earl.

The city then paid forty-five pounds for its farm, and three timbers (one hundred and twenty) of martin skins; the third to the Earl, and two-thirds to the King.

When Hugh the Earl had the city granted to him, it was worth only thirty pounds, having been much devastated. There were two hundred and five less houses than there were in the time of King Edward. There is the same number now as Hugh found there.

Mundret held this city under the Earl seventy pounds, and one mark of gold.

He also farmed all the pleas of the Earl in the hundred and county, except Inglefield, for fifty pounds more, and one mark of gold.

All the land in which stands the Church of St. Peter, which Robert de Rodelend claimed for Thaneland, never, as is testified by the county jury, belonged to the manor without the city, but belongs to the borough, (*Query*, the Bishops, or perhaps that of Handbridge?) and was always in the custom of the King and the Earl, as other burgages are.

The BISHOP of CHESTER holds SUDTONE, (*Sutton*), where there is one hide assessable. Here are three carucates of land, one of which is held in desmesne. Five villagers and two borderers occupy one carucate. There are also six acres of meadow land. It was worth, in the time of King Edward,† forty shillings: it is now worth twenty shillings.

\* The words in the original are *Cathedra ponebatur stereoris*, probably best translated by a *tumbil*, defined by Bayley to be a dung cart, also a ducking stool. It was used by the Saxons, and is described as consisting of a long beam of wood, moving on a fulcrum. To one arm was attached a stool, to which the delinquent was tied, and then ducked into the most stagnant or filthy pool of water that could be found. There are frequent entries of money paid for the repairs of this instrument, which was the ordinary punishment of offending brewers, bakers, common scolds, and, as the Guild laws add, "any misruled woman of her body, that is called a common sinner."

† As, in every instance, the date when the properties are stated to have been held, and also that of their valuations, is "in the time of King Edward" the Confessor, these words will not be repeated.

The CHURCH of ST. WARBURGH, in the city of Chester, holds and held CROSTONE, (*Croughton*), where there is one hide assessable. The land consists of one carucate. One radman, two villagers, and one borderer have among them one carucate. There is an acre of meadow land. It was valued at, and is now worth, ten shillings.

The said Church holds and held SUTTON, where there is one hide assessable. The land is five carucates, and in desmesne is half of one. Five villagers and nine borderers have between them two carucates. It was worth forty shillings, and is now worth only thirty shillings.

The same Church holds SOLHARE, (*Great Saughall*), assessed at one hide. The land consists of one carucate in desmesne, with two servants, one villager, and one borderer. It was held to be worth sixteen shillings, which is the present value.

The same Church holds SOROWICKE, (*Shotwick*), where there is one hide assessable. The land consists of three carucates; there are four villagers and two borderers, who have one carucate, and there is one acre of meadow land. It was worth sixteen shillings, now thirteen shillings and threepence.

The same Church held and now holds NESTONE, (*Neston*), which William has under the Church. It is assessable at three parts of two hides. The land is one carucate. It pays and did pay, for the entire farm, seventeen shillings and fourpence.

The same Church held and now holds RABY, which William also holds under the Church. There is chargeable half a hide. The rent of the farm is six shillings and eightpence.

HUGH the EARL of CHESTER holds ESTHAM, (*Eastham*); Earl Edwin held it. The land is assessable at twenty-two hides. In desmesne are two carucates; and four servants, fourteen villagers, and ten borderers, have six carucates; there are also one mill, two radmen, and a priest. Of the land in this manor Mundrit holds two hides, and Hugh two hides, and William one; Hamo holds seven hides, Robert one, and Robertus and Walter have each half a hide. In desmesne are four carucates; and eight herdsmen, twenty-two villagers, two borderers, five radmen, and two foreigners, have nine carucates among them. The whole manor was worth twenty-four pounds, afterwards four pounds. The part the Earl held was worth four pounds; that of the others, one hundred and twelve shillings.

The same Earl holds UPTON; it was held by Earl Edwin. It is assessable at four hides and a half. The land is twelve carucates, one of which is in desmesne. There are two herdsmen, twelve villagers, and two radmen, with five carucates. Of the land of this manor Hamo holds two parts of one hide, and Herbert half a hide, and Mundrit one hide. There are in desmesne four carucates; and eight herdsmen, two villagers, and two borderers, who hold among them one carucate. There is one acre of meadow. The whole manor was considered worth sixty shillings; the land held by the Earl is now worth forty-five shillings, and that of his men, forty shillings.

The same Earl holds STANNEI, (*Stanney*), which Restaldus has under him. Ragenal held it as a freeman. It is assessable at one hide: the land consists of two carucates. In the desmesne is one carucate, with two herdsmen, two villagers, and two borderers, also one fishery. It was worth twelve shillings, and at present it is worth fourteen. Of this land the fifth part did of right belong to the Church

of St. Werburg, and it has been certified by the county that the clergy complain it is unjustly kept from them.

ROBERTUS, filius Hugonis, holds SUTTON. Tochi, a freeman, held it. The land consists of three carucates, of which one is in desmesne, with three borderers and one villager. It is assessed at one hide. There are six acres of meadow land. It was worth, in King Edward's time, forty shillings, afterwards only six shillings, and it is now of the value of sixty-four pence.

ROBERT DE RODELENT holds MOLINTONE, (*Mollington Banastre, or Little Mollington.*) It was held by Godwin, a freeman. There is one hide and a half assessable. The land consists of three carucates; there is one in desmesne, with two acres of meadow land and one of wood. There are three villagers, three borderers, and three servants. It was waste in the time of King Edward; previously it had been worth twenty shillings, and it is now worth fifteen shillings.

The same Robert held MOLINTONE, (*Mollington Tarrant, or Great Mollington.*) and Lambert has it under him. Gunner and Ulf, who were freemen, held it in two manors. There is one hide assessable. The land consists of two carucates; there is one in desmesne, with two servants. There are two acres of meadow land, worth fourteen shillings. It was waste, and it is now found so.

The same Robert holds LESTONZ, (*Leighton.*) and William under him. Levanol, a freeman, held it. There is one hide assessable. The land consists of two carucates. On the desmesne is one, with one servant, one foreigner, and two borderers, and there are two fisheries. It was valued, and is now worth fifteen shillings.

The same Robert holds TORINTONE, (*Thornton Mayew.*) and William has it under him. Ulchetel, a freeman, held it. There is half a hide assessable. The land is two carucates. There is one radman, one villager, and one borderer, who have half a carucate. It was valued at ten shillings, and afterwards, as now, worth five shillings.

The same Robert holds GAETON, (*Gayton.*) and William of him. Levenot, a freeman, held it. There is one hide assessable. The land is two carucates. There are two villagers and three borderers who have one carucate, and there are two fisheries. The value was fifteen shillings, afterwards two shillings, and now three shillings.

The same Robert holds ESSWELLE, (*Heswall.*) and Herbert has it under him. Ulchel held it, and was a freeman. There are two hides assessable. The land is four carucates; in desmesne one carucate; and there are two herdsmen, three villagers, and one borderer with a carucate. It was worth sixteen shillings, and afterwards twenty shillings, and is now worth twenty-two shillings.

The same Robert holds TURASTANETON, (*Thurstanton.*) and William holds it under him. There are two hides assessable; in desmesne is one; and there are two herdsmen, four villagers, and four borderers, who have one carucate and a half. It was valued at thirty shillings, and afterwards eight, and is now worth sixteen.

The same Robert holds CALDEB, (*Caldy.*) Levenot held it, and was free. There are three hides assessable. The land consists of ten carucates; there are five villagers and five borderers, who have two carucates, and there is one foreigner, with a servant, who have two carucates. In desmesne there are two

bovates, and two acres of meadow; it was worth fifty shillings, afterwards ten, and now twenty-four shillings.

The said Robert holds MELAS, (now *Great Meolse*;) Levenot held it. There is one hide assessable. The land is one carucate and a half; there is one radman, two villagers, and two borderers, who have a carucate. It was worth fifteen shillings, now ten shillings. It was found waste.

The same Robert holds MELAS, (*Little Meolse*.) Levenot held it. There is one hide assessable. The land is three carucates. There is one radman, three villagers, and three borderers, with one carucate. It was worth ten shillings, afterwards eight, and now twelve shillings.

The same Robert holds WALEA, (*Wallasey*.) Uctred, a freeman, held it. There is one hide and a half assessable. The land consists of four carucates. There is one villager and one borderer, with half a carucate; one foreigner, who hath a carucate; with two herdsmen, one radman, and one borderer.

The value is not stated.

ROBERT THE COOK (*Cocus*) holds NESTONE, (*Neston*), from the Earl. Osgot, who was a freeman, held it. There is one hide assessable. The land is three carucates; in desmesne are two. There is one servant, two villagers, and four borderers, with one carucate, and there is one foreigner. It was valued at thirteen shillings and fourpence, now worth sixteen shillings. The land is waste. [See *Neston* again, page 9.]

The same Robert holds HANGRAVE. Osgot held it. There is one hide assessable. The land is two carucates. There are three villagers and two borderers, who have a carucate. It was worth six shillings and eightpence, and is now worth ten shillings. When it was granted to Robert, it was valued at four shillings.

RICHARDUS de VERNON holds HOTOX, (*Hooton*;) Toci held it. There is one hide and two parts of one hide assessable. The land consists of three carucates; there are four radmen, one villager, four borderers, with two carucates. It was valued at thirty shillings, afterwards at five, and now at sixteen shillings.

WALTER de VERNON holds NESSE, (*Ness*;) Erniet held it. There is one hide and a half assessable. In desmesne is one; there are two herdsmen, five villagers, and three borderers, with two carucates; there is half an acre of meadow land. It was worth twenty, and is now worth sixteen shillings.

The same Walter holds LEVETSHAM, (*Ledsham*;) Erniott held it. There is one hide assessable. The land is two carucates; in desmesne is half a carucate, and one servant, one radman, and one borderer, with half a carucate amongst them.

The same Walter holds PRESTUNE, (*Preston*;) Ulviet, Edric, and Leuvede, who were freemen, held it as three manors. There is one hide and a half assessable. The land consists of three carucates, and there is one in desmesne. There are two herdsmen, two borderers, and there is a mill for the service of the tenants of the manor, (*serviens curiæ*.) A wood three miles long and three miles broad. The value was formerly seven shillings, and is now worth five shillings.

WILLIAM de MALBEDENG holds POL, (*Poole*;) Ernuin held it as a manor. The land is assessable at four bovates. There is one villager and one borderer who has half a carucate. It was, and is now, worth four shillings.

The same William holds SALHALLE, (*Saughall*.) Leving, who held it, was a freeman. There are six hides assessable. The land contains six carucates, of which one and a half is in desmesne; and one servant, seven villagers, one radman, and four borderers, have three carucates and a half. There is a fishery there. It was worth twenty shillings, afterwards twenty-two shillings, and now forty-five shillings.

The same William holds LANDECHENE, (*Landican*.) Essul, a freeman, held it. There are seven hides assessable. The land consists of eight carucates, and there is in demesne one; a priest, (*et Presbyter*,) nine villagers, seven borderers, and four foreigners, have five carucates among them all. Was worth fifty shillings; now worth forty shillings, but it is waste.

The same William holds UPTONE, (*Upton*,) and Colbertus, who held it as a freeman, has it now under him. There are three hides assessable; the land is five carucates. In desmesne is one; there are four servants, two villagers, one radman, and four borderers having a carucate. There are two acres of meadow land. It was worth twenty-five shillings; now worth twenty.

The same William holds TUIGVELLE, (*Thingwall*,) and Durandus has it under him. Winterlet held it, and was a freeman. There is one hide assessable. The land consists of two carucates; in desmesne is one; there are two servants, one villager, and one borderer, who have another. It was worth eight, and now five shillings.

The same William holds CHENOTRIZ, (*Noetorum*,) and Richard of him. Colbertus, a freeman, held it. There is half a hide assessable. The land is one carucate, which is in desmesne, with two radmen and two villagers. It was valued at fifteen shillings, and is now worth ten shillings. It was found waste.

William Fitz Nigell holds NESTONE, (*Neston*.) Erne held it, and was a freeman. There are two parts of a hide assessable. The land is four carucates; in desmesne are two carucates; one servant, a priest, and four villagers and two borderers, have three carucates. It was valued at twenty shillings, and is worth now twenty-five shillings.

The same William holds RABY, and Arduinus holds it under him. Erne held it. There is half a hide assessable. The land consists of one carucate in desmesne, and there is one servant, two villagers, and two borderers, with one carucate. It was worth ten shillings, afterwards fourteen, and now twenty shillings.

The same William holds CAPELLES, (*Capenhurst*,) and David has it under him. There is half a hide assessable. Erne held it. The land is one carucate. There is one villager and two borderers. It was worth five shillings, and is now worth eight shillings.

The same William holds BERNSTONE, (*Barnston*,) and Randolph under him. Leviatt and Raunsuar, who were freemen, held it in two manors. There is one hide assessable. The land is two carucates: in desmesne is one. There are two herdsman and three borderers. It is worth ten shillings, but was found waste.

HUGH de MABA holds CALDERS, (*Caldy*;) Ernet, who was a freeman, held it. There is one hide assessable. The land is three carucates; in the desmesne is one carucate, with a borderer. It was valued at five shillings, and is now worth ten shillings.



RANULPHUS holds, under Hugh the Earl, BLACHEHOLL, (*Blaconhall*;) Toret held it, and was a freeman. There are two hides assessable. The land is four carucates; in desmeane are two; four herds-men, four villagers, and four borderers, have a carucate. There is a fishery. It was valued at fourteen shillings, and is now worth forty shillings.

OSBERNUS FILIUS TEZZONIS holds PONTONE, (*Poulton*;) and Roger has it under him; Gamel, who was a freeman, held it. There are two hides assessable. The land is four carucates; in desmeane is one; and two servants, one radman, one villager and one priest, with four borderers, have one carucate among them all. It was worth twenty-five shillings, afterwards it was waste, now again worth twenty-five shillings. This refers to Poulton *Lancelyn*.

NIGELLUS holds GREAVESBERIE, (*Greasby*.) Dunning held it. There were two hides assessable. The land consists of three carucates: in desmeane is one; and there are two servants, three villagers, two foreigners, and one borderer, having a carucate among them. It was valued at twenty-five shillings, afterwards ten, and now worth twenty shillings.

The same Nigellus holds STORERTON. Dunning held it. There are two hides assessable. The land consists of three carucates: in desmeane is half a one; with one servant, five villagers, and three borderers, having a carucate and a half. It was valued at fifteen shillings; now it is worth twenty shillings. It was waste.

HAMO holds under the Earl POTITONE, (*Puddington*.) Uluric, who was a freeman, held it. It is assessable at two hides and a half. The land consists of three carucates: in desmeane is one. There is one servant, four villagers, four borderers, and one radman, who have one carucate. It was worth twenty shillings. *This, in the Survey, is erroneously placed in the Hundred of Warmundestrow.*

## THE HUNDRED OF WIRRAL,—1600 TO 1602.

THE following Description of the Hundred of Wirral was compiled by WILLIAM WEBB, A.M., Under Sheriff to Sir RICHARD LEA, of Lea and of Dernhall, in 1615—1616, and published in King's Vale Royal. It is given in the exact words of the original:—

“ I have laboured to cast the Hundred of Wirral by the dimensions thereof into some resemblance, and though, geometrically considered, it comes nearest to the figure of a long square, or rather a rhomboide, yet because the long sides are not straight lines, nor the opposite ends equal in their distance, we must take it, as it is, irregular; and the nearest resemblance that I can give it, is the sole of a lady's left-foot pantafile, for the furthest north-west end, compassed with the sea, falls somewhat round; then it

narrows itself both ways, and between Bebbington on the east, and Oldfield on the west side, falls narrow of the sole; then it widens itself either way to Stanney, on the one side, and Burton on the other, where it is broadest; then narrowing again till it points with the tip of the toe upon Chester liberties. The Welch Britons call it Killgurry, because it is an angle. That it was in old time a forest, I think cannot be doubted, but that it should not be inhabited, or disforested, till Edward the Third's time, that I suppose to be true but in part; for the very antiquity of the church, some castles, monasteries, and the very manurage (*query*, manorage) of the most part of it yet appearing argue, the contrary.

"But I will not contend, for it sufficeth me that I can boast in behalf of the inhabitants there now, and of their industrious predecessors too, that it is at present one of the most fertile parts, and comparable, if not exceeding, any other so much in quantity of the whole county besides. And this will our weekly market of Chester for corn and fish make good for me, and if I add flesh too, I should not miss it much.

"To proceed with the description of it, I shall need to lead you but one walk over the length of it, and back again, which I will covenant to dispatch with much brevity, if I may in my walk make some indentures on either hand, as these jovial fellows we see sometimes do, when, coming out of the Tavern, they indent their journies down the street, to survey their friends on either side.

"We will here set in, at the tip of the toe, which comes to the Stone-bridge almost at Chester; and first, we will follow that water dividing this from Bolton hundred, which will bring us a little behind Upton to Chorlton, and then to the Lea, a fair house and fine desmesne, so called, and hath been the mansion for some descents of the Glaziers, esquires, of special note and good account. And next unto it lies Backford town and church, and hard by it the seat of our worthy prothonotary Henry Berkenhead, esquire, a gentleman whom the whole Country most deservedly acknowledges to have inherited, together with his place, that humanity and fair deportment that were in his fathers and ancestors before him. From whence, as we go, we see on the west of us Capenhurst, a fine lordship, belonging to the houses of Cholmondeley and of Poole, and in the same one gentleman's seat

"By our brook lies Croughton, a member of the lordship of John Hurleston, esquire; and from thence we come to Stoke, a little parish church adjoining to that fair desmesne and ancient seat of the Bunburies, of good worship, called Staney-hall, and which may be glad of the worthy present owner, Sir Henry Bunbury, knight, whose grave and well-disposed courses procure unto him a special good estimation for his endeavours to do good in public government, and his more private affairs also.

"We turn us now towards our journey more westward, passing by Whitby; and from whence it may seem the Whitbys derived their name; of whom this gentleman that now bears part in the government of this city has advanced their names to no mean degree of deserved estimation.\*

"Then holding our course we go by Great Sutton, a goodly lordship, and where hath been a famous seat called Sutton Court, the inheritance now of Sir Robert Cholmondely; and upon our other hand Pool, a fair ancient seat, with a park, of which the long-continued race of the Pools have borne that name, and

\* Robert Whitby, Clerk of the Pentice, or Town-clerk, 1602, father of Edward Whitby, Recorder of Chester, 1613 to 1630, and also member in Parliament for five sessions, between the 12th James I and 3rd Charles I.

it is very probable have been the ancestors of some very great families of that name in other counties; the present owner there John Pool, esquire. Near unto which we see also Stanlow, now a farm of the said Mr. Pool's.

" But there was a Monastery founded by the famous Lacy, constable of Chester, about the year 1173, taking the name from Staney-hill, but for the unruliness of the Mersey-Water they misliked their seat there, and found means to be translated from thence to Whaley, in Lancashire.

" We come next to Hooton, a goodly ancient manor and fair part, which, ever since the reign of King Richard the Second, hath been the seat of the Stanleys of Hooton, gentlemen of great dignity and worth, deriving their pedigree from Allan Silvester, upon whom Ranulph the first Earl (*of that name*) of Chester bestowed the bailiwick of the forest of Wirral, and delivered unto him a horn, to be a token of his gift; from whence we gather that Wirral was holden to be a place of no mean account in those times; where have continued the same Stanleys in a direct succession, and was lately possessed by a very worthy and noble-minded knight, Sir Rowland Stanley, who lived there to the age, I have heard, of near one hundred years, and lived to be the oldest knight in this land; which I note the rather to approve the healthfulness of the place, and where his fourth generation, his son's son's son was at the time of his decease. Near unto which stands Eastham, the parish church and lordship.

" Next beyond it we leave on our left hand Brinstone, (*Brimstage*,) and so come to Pooton, or Poulton, of which name there is another township, from which this is distinguished by the name of Lancelot, and the next to that is Brumbrough, a pretty town, with a chapel; and therein Daniel Bavand, esquire, hath a fair house and desmesne; next which lies Nether Bebbington and Over Bebbington, the precincts whereof take up in this tract a large extent; the one a church town with a fair church and goodly parsonage, the other a member of the parish where John Minshal, esquire, of Minshal, hath great store of fair possessions.

" Upon our left hand we leave Stoorton, a lordship, and so go by Prenton, where one race of the Hawkenhals have a fine house and desmesne; the present owner thereof John Okenhall, esquire. Beyond which lieth Lanian, or Llandecan, a township with pretty farms in it, the lands of Sir Richard Wilbraham, knight and baronet; and from thence we go next to Woodchurch, a parish church and a neat parsonage by it; beneath which, looking towards the Mersey again, lies a goodly vale and pleasant track in which we may see Upton, a fine lordship, wherein stand the house and desmesne, where a long descent of gentlemen have had continuance, sprung from the house of Bould, of Bould in Lancashire, the now owner thereof Peter Bould, esquire, to whom I owe particular respects of love; and next unto this Oxton; and then nearer to the Mersey side the township of Tranmore; and near to that is a fine seat of that worthy gentleman, whom elsewhere we remembered, John Minshal, of Minshal, esquire, called Derby House.

" Thence, on our left hand, we see Caughton—(*Cloughton*) where Mr. Thomas Powell hath fair lands; and then leaving the ferry, where the passage lies over into Lancashire, to Liverpool, we step over into Berket-wood, and where hath been a famous priory, the foundation whereof I am not yet instructed for, but now a very goodly desmesne, and which is become (by descent from the Worsleys, men of great

possessions) now to a gentleman of much worth, Thomas Powell, esquire, the heir of that ancient seat of Horsley, in the county of Flint, and one whom our county may gladly receive to be added to the number of those that deserve better commendation than I am fit to give them; though unto him I am particularly bound to extend my wits to a higher reach than here I will make trial of.

"Beyond which, we have only that other Poulton called by the name of Seacombe, till we come to the north-western shore, laying upon the Vergivian or Irish Sea, where are situate the township, parish and church of Kirby, in Walley, or Walsey, a town which hath fair lands, and where lie these fair sands, or plains, upon the shore of the sea, which, for the fitness for such a purpose, allure the gentlemen and others oft to appoint great matches and venture no small sums in trying the swiftness of their horses.

"And so we come to Bidston, a goodly house, deameane, and park of the right honourable William Earl of Derby; which, though it be less than many other seats which his honour hath, wherein to make his residences when he is so pleased; yet for the pleasant situation of this, and the variety of noble delights appendent to it, his lordship seems much to affect the same, and enlargeth the conveniences therein for his pleasure and abode many ways, which, with craving pardon for my bold collections, I suppose his honour doth out of his honourable love to this our county, that we might have the more of his presence here, where he bears the great places of his Majesty's lord lieutenant, in the causes military, and the Prince's highness, chamberlain of the county palatine, as his noble and worthy ancestors have done before him.

"Following the circuit of the shire, we come next to Great Meoles, which gives name and seat to an ancient family of Meoles; whence we go by Moreton, and then by Sanghall Massie, a very gallant lordship; and leaving Overchurch on our left hand, in which we pass by Newton, and somewhat beyond that by Greasby, where we hold on nearer the shore, and take with us West Kirby: here in the utmost western nook of this promontory, divided from the land, lies that little barren island called Ilbree, or Hilbree; in which it is said there was sometime a cell of monks, though I scarce believe it; for that kind of people loved warmer seats than this could ever be.

"From thence we come next to the Graunge, which I would rather think to be that seat where those monks eat their beef and brewis, and which is now possessed by William Glegg, esquire, being descended to him from his ancestors; upon the side of this to the east lies Frankley (*Frankby*), a large township, and so we come to the two townships Great and Little Cady.

"Near unto which lies the station or landing place for their boats and barges, with their laden and unladen commodities, called the Red-bank; so I take it from the colour of the rock upon the shore-brink; and near unto this lies Irby, another fair lordship, wherein the Balls, freeholders, have a good seat. And we come thence to Thurstanton, the ancient seat of the Whitmores of Thurstanton, the owner now — Whitmore, esquire; which race, whether they had their beginning from the city of Chester, in which have been many mayors of that name, or that from them came the name into Chester, their own evidence, wherewithal I am not acquainted, can better declare it than I can. On the east side of it lies Barnaston, whence it is like the Barnastons, gentlemen in Broxton hundred, had their own name first; and upon the shore side we come next to the Oldfield, where we said the narrowest place of the hundred

is supposed ; and it is like hath given name to these gentlemen, the Oldfields, of whom mention has been made before.

“ Our next remove is to Heswall, or Hesselwall, a town where stand the parish church and parsonage, finely situated ; and there extends to it a fair lordship of Thornton Mayow, and Raby, another very pleasant view of a large precinct.

“ But near the sea side we come to Gayton, the seat of that ancient race of Gleggs of Gayton, now the possession of Edward Glegg, esquire, a gentleman well reputed ; and next unto lies Leighton, in which is seated in a very ancient house and fine desmeane, another branch of the Whitmores, of a very great descent, the owner now William Whitmore, esquire. And next neighbour to this are the well-known town, parish church and port of Great Neston ; and the usual place where our passengers into Ireland do so often lie waiting the leisure of the winds, which makes many people better acquainted with this place than they desire to be, though here be wanting no convenient entertainment, if no other wants be in the way ; and here is the station of the ships called The New Key, where they embark and disembark both men, horses, kine and all other commodities on the back of this Neston ; to the east lies a large tract of heath and commons, and therein a fair lordship called Childer Thornton.

“ But keeping still our shore we come to Nesse. And next to that more landwards Woollaston, a great breadth of grounds. And then have we Burton, a pretty town. And a landing place by the side of a great brow of a promontory reaching into the sea, they call it Burton-head ; and next to this we come to that gallant lofty seat of Puddington, overlooking the sea, which so far holds on her large breadth unlimited within the mouth of Dee, wherein have continued the race of the Massies, which has been a great name, divided into many branches from that Hamon Massie one of the Earl's barons, and the owner now Sir William Massie, knight, who adds more lustre to the fame of his predecessors, which seat is also beautified with a fine park ; a great spacious common, which they vulgarly call Motherless Heath, lies eastward behind this a great way further, at the one side whereof we see Ledsham ; and so we come to Shotwich, a little parish church, and near unto it an ancient house that hath belonged to John Hockenhall of Hockenhall, esquire, and so we come to that gallant park called Shotwick-park, where sometimes have been, and yet are remaining, the ruins of a fair castle that stands upon the brink of Dee within the park, in which is also a fine lodge for the habitation of the keepers of the Princess Highness's deer in that park, and is in the holding of Sir Richard Wilbraham, aforementioned ; from whence we come presently to Great Saughall, a fair lordship, and chiefly belonging to His Highness ; and Little Saughall, another fine township, the lands of sundry freeholders there inhabiting ; and along by the precincts of them both, lies a place called anciently Kingswood, where now his Highness's tenants have made enclosures, to the great encrease of corn for the benefit of the country. And next to this lies, first a goodly ancient seat, upon the brow of Dee banks, called Blacon Hall, the name of the whole lordship, the lands of Sir William Norris, knight of the Bath, whom Lancashire hath the most interest in making his chief residence among them, where he hath great possessions ; and then adjoineth Crabhall, the desmeane of William Gamul, a prime alderman of the city of Chester, who there hath a most delicate fine house, to retire into at his pleasure, and choice appendants both for pleasure and

profit. Round about it we have nothing left but upon our left hand the two Mollingtons, called Banaster and Torrant, a fair lordship, and whereof much of the lands have belonged to the Mordaunts, great knights of Ocley, in Bedfordshire, but now to several purchasers in those parts. And thus we arrive again at the tip of the toe in our description, being to come home presently to the famous city again.

"Here followeth the names of all the knights, esquires, gentlemen, and freeholders in Wirral hundred:—

Sir ROWLAND STANLEY, of Hooton, knight.  
WILLIAM MASSEY, of Puddington, esq.  
JOHN POOL, of Pool, esq.  
THOMAS BUNBURY, of Stanney, esq.  
RICHARD HOUGH, of Leighton.  
ROBERT FLETCHER, of Morley.  
JOHN WHITMORE, of Thurstaston.  
WILLIAM GLEGG, of Gayton.  
ROBERT PARRE, of Backford.

PETER BOULD, of Upton.  
JOHN HOCKNELL, of Prenton.  
EDWARD STANLEY, of Pooton.  
— BENNET, of Saughall.  
THOMAS DOE, of Saughall.  
JOHN MEALSE, of Meales.  
JOHN KIRKES, of Lea; and  
JOHN YOUNG, of Neston.

## THE HUNDRED OF WIRRAL—1668 to 1671.

Is the Harleian MSS. is an account of WIRRAL, in the handwriting of the third Randle Holmes. It appears to have been compiled in 1668; and it is certain, from a variety of dates and internal memoranda, that he revisited the hundred in 1671, when he noticed various alterations that had occurred in the principal families. The following is an exact copy of this survey, which, from the minute attention paid by — Holmes to some of the townships, and from the particular examination that has been made into others to test its accuracy, may be taken to be substantially correct. It presents a singular contrast to the present occupancy of the hundred, in which the number of freeholders and occupiers of land at a rental of fifty pounds or upwards, registered as Parliamentary voters for 1843-4, is now nearly two thousand.

Ann. 1668. Towns.	Lords of ye said Towns.	Houses and places of note.	Particulars.
Arrove	Lady Kilmercy, who gave it to Thomas Needham, her son, who is now Lord of it	Arrove Hall	
Ashfield, a hamlet in Neston Magna	Mr. Poole, of Poole		
Birketwood Abbey	Sir Thomas Powell, of Hornley; formerly an abbey, and bought of ye King, by — Worsley, whose heir married to Powell's ancestor	The Grange	
Backford	Mr. Shingleton, Birkenhead	Routhescroft	A manor, anciently in Backford, given to the Abbey of Stanlaw Mr. Thomas Birkenhead, a freeholder; now (1671) gone to the five daughters of old Henry Birkenhead No freeholders here
Bebington, superior	Mr. Cholmondley, of Vale Royal		
Bebington, inferior	Mr. Cholmondley, of Vale Royal Richard Greene, of Pulton	Derby House	Hugh Poole, Peter Bennett, John Currey, Robert Goodacre Sir William Stanley, of Heston, hath land here Edward Massey, of Puddington, hath land here The parson of Bebington, <i>similar</i> Mr. Peter Bennett, Robert Goodacre, Earl of Shrewsbury Mr. William Gamull, of Crabwall No freeholder here
Bernston			
Blacon	Mr. Crewe, of Crewe	Crabal	
Brunetagh	Earl of Bridgewater, Earl of Shrewsbury		
Bromborough	Mr. Edward Bradshaw, of Chester, Alderman; it lately belonged to — Bridgeman, Bishop of Chester, whose son, Sir Orlando, sold it to — Greene, and he sold it to Edward Goodal, that is, the land, the hall, the royalty, and the court which Mr. Bradshaw bought	Bromborough Hall	Now Sir James Bradshaw, Knight Samuel Hardware, Esq., Richard Swan, William Plymlow, John Ragnall, John Tollet, Edward Gibbins, Francis Hill, William Davys, Sir Thomas Powell, of Hornley

THE HUNDRED OF WIRRAL.

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Anno 1688. Towns.	Lords of ye said Towns.	Hamlets and places of note.	Freeholders.
Bidston	Lord ( <i>Earl</i> ) of Kingston, late the Earl of Darby's, who sold it to — Steele, a counsellor, and he to the Lord of Kingston	Forde Forde Brooke New Hall by Wallasey	No freeholder in it Sir Philip Egerton, Henry Robinson, Robert Urmston, of Moreton, John Bennett, of Saughal, George Bennett, of Saughal, Earl of Bridgewater, Sir William Stanley, of Hooton
Burton	Mr. Massey, of Puddington, for his life, —the inheritance belongs to the See of Lichfield	Denwall	The parsonage house aunciently an hospital Mr. Massey, of Puddington Sir Thomas Smith, Bart. Mr. Glegge, of Gayton Mr. Holland hath two houses Mr. — Coventry
Caldy Magna Caldy Parva, or Caldy Grange	William Whitmore, of Thurstanton Mr. Glegge, of Grange	Larton Newbold, by the mize books, in Caldys Magna	Mr. Poole, of Poole, hath the hall and much land here
Capenhurst	The Lord Cholmondley	Capenhurst Hall	The Lord of Kingston, Randle Dodd, of Edge, Rowland Huntingdon, John Francis, and Robert, his son, William White, Jo. Yates, Jo. Hallwood, Sen., Jo. Hallwood, Jun., Tho. Bennett, Thom. Hastings
Childer Thornton	The Royalty belongs to all the towne freeholders		George Chamberlaine, bought of Mr. Morgall, of Moston, Mr. Richard Acton, of Chester, Mr. William Morgall, John Hatton, Arthur Wilkinson, Sir William Stanley, of Hooton, Bart., Sir James Bradshaw, of Chester
Chorlton	All freeholders of the town pay a chieft rent to the Dean and Chapter of Chester		None here
Claghton Croughton Eastham Frankby, parcel of the Manor of Oxton	Sir Thomas Powell, of Horsley, Bart. Sir William Stanley, of Hooton All freeholders, but appeare to Oxton Court, which belongs to the Earl of Derby	Grange Plym Yard	No freeholder here Peter Day, Robert Younge, John Bennett, Thomas Peck, John Littler, William and Samuel Rathbone, Henry Yonge, of Chester, John Gibson
Gayton Greseby	Mr. Edward Glegge All freeholders		Never a freeholder Henry Yonge, of Chester, William Thomas, Joseph Walton, (holds of his mother till he come to age, 17) John Harrison, Mr. Peter Bennett, John Walton, Robert Hoole, Robert White, John Richardson
Grange	Mr. Glegge, of Grange	A hanilet in Caldys	No freeholders
Heswall	Mr. Glegge, of Gayton } Lords and pa. Mr. Browne, of Oxton } trons jointly		No freeholders here
Hooton Hulse	Sir William Stanley Robert Urmston John Feld, of Bidston	Ronacre, or Ronaker	
Irby, or Erby	Dean and Chapter	Irby Hall	Mr. Glegge, of Gayton, bought it of Captain William Rabone, ( <i>query Rathbone</i> ), of Frankby, William Bennett, of Chester, alderman, engaged to Mr. Wilson, of Chester, tanner, Robert Hodgson, George Ball, John Urmston, Samuel Yonge



## THE HUNDRED OF WIRRAL.

Asse MSS. Towns.	Leads of ye said Towns.	Hamlets and places of note.	Freeholders.
Kirby-in-Walleys		Walleys, or Walliza	
Knocktorum, or Noctorum	Dean and Chapter of Chester; hath a chief rent. Mr. Crosse, Lancashire		
Landecan, or Landechone	Sir Thomas Wilbraham, of Woodhey, Bart.		Mr. Hickock, of Lan.
Ledsham	Mr. Massey, of Puddington, <i>due villa</i> ; they have seats and burying places in Burton, for convenience sake, but they are in Neston Parish		John Crosse, of Ledsham, an attorney in Chester
Lee, or Lea	Thomas Glassior, of Lea, Esq.		
Leighton	Mr. — Savage		Mr. Poole, of Poole, John Sarratt
Liscarde, or Lustarkd			
Lairton, a hamlet in Newton			
Meolse Magna	Mr. Meolse		Sir Roger Mostyn, of Mostyn Sir William Stanley, of Hooton
Meolse	Sir Thomas Stanley, of Alderley		
Mollington Banastre			Edward Glegge, of Gayton, Esq., Wm. Gamull, of Crabwall, — Francia, — Thomas Birkenhead, Edward Morgell, Richard Harrison, (an infant,) Ralph —, of Chester, baker, Thomas Welchman, Joseph Barlow, Robert, Ridge, of Chester, vintner, George Booth, Esq., William Bispham, William Martin, of Chester, barber, <i>Thos. Weleby, Saul Farrington, Jo. Dodd, all infants, (1671.) Thomas Kirk, Jonathan Cross, of Chester</i>
Mollington Torrold, or Torant.			Robert Urmason, owner, Thomas Langford, John Webster, John Urmston, Sir Philip Egerton, of Oulton, Thomas Healey, of Upton-by-Chester, John Westan, William Lea
Moreton; had a chapel	Baron of Kingston, in Ireland, late the Earl of Derby's, who sold it to — Steele, counsellor, who sold it to Lord Kingston		Mr. Massie, of Puddington, Mr. Harpur, of Huntingdon, — Barrow, <i>his widow holds it now till his son Daniel comes to age</i>
Nesse	Mr. Massey, of Puddington	Nesbolt	Mr. Harpur, of Huntingdon, hath a freehold, and the appropriation of all the tithes of Neston, <i>Magna et Parva</i> , Nesse, Wollaston, and Ledsham, by the gift of Sir John Harpur, of Swanestone, in the County of Derby; the tithes of the other Townships and the white tithes belonging to the Vicar
Neston Magna	Mr. Savage, of Leighton	Parkgate Ashfield	Mr. Lodge bought it of Thomas Oxton, clarke, who bought it of Thomas Webster, minister
Neston Parva	Mr. Thomas Cottingham	Hargrave	Mr. Cottingham, Tho. Soand, of Little Neston
	Thomas Talbot, Esq., brother to the late Earl of Shrewsbury	Key House	
Newton	Mr. Massey, of Puddington, a 3rd part Thos. Bennett, of Newton, a 5th Henry Newyt, — a 5th } 3rd do. William Phillips Thomas Gile, } John Eaton } 3rd do.	Lairton	Henry Newport, I house, Widow Alice Warrington the other house

THE HUNDRED OF WIRRAL.

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Anno 1688. Towns.	Lords of ye said Towns.	Hamlets and places of note.	Freeholders.
Oxton, or Oxon Oldfield Pensby Poole, superior Poole, inferior Prenton Puddington Pulton, or Pulton- cum-Secum	Earl of Shrewsbury Mr. Glegge, of Gayton  James Poole, of Poole, Esq. James Poole, of Poole, Esq. George Hocknell, of Prenton Edward Massey, of P., Esq.	Prenton Hall The Groves Secum, also Seacomb Pulton Brook Spittle	No freeholders here No other freeholder here No other freeholder here
Pulton, or Pulton- cum-Spittle Raby	Richard Green, of P. <i>Generosus</i>  Earl of Shrewsbury D'no, but now holds of his Countess in Dower a hamlet in Hooton: Sir William Stanley Baron of Kingston, in Ireland; bought it of — Steele, counsellor, who bought it of the Earl of Derby		Edward Litherland, Henry Bird, John Dobb, Richard Yonge No freeholders here
Ronacre Saughall Massey	Mr. Hocknel, of Hocknel		George Bennett, John Bennett
Shotwicke, or Rod Scotwicke	Thomas Bunbury, of Stanney, Esq. Thomas Bunbury, of Stanney, Esq.	Rod Shotwicke Shotwicke Park Two milnes on ye heath	Sir Thomas Wilbraham; in the park is an old castle Robert Lloyd, in Wales, minister Lord Cholmondley, Mr. Hockenhall, and Thomas Hiccocks, Lords of it No other freeholder here No other freeholder here
Stanney Magna Stanney Parva, or Stanney Grange Saughall Magna	Sir Thomas Wilbraham, of Woodhey	Woodbank	John Bennett, Thomas Barlow, John Massey, Lord Cholmondley, John Cooke, Sir William Stanley, of Hoo- ton, Richard Carter, Mr. Calcot, of Isle of Man, Thomas Wilcock, alder- man, George Johnson, Robert Cham- berlaine, Andrew Low, Robert Fisher, —, Thomas Trafford, ye minister James Dod and Jo. Gibson, — Massey, who bought it of Hugh Barkley, of Chester, Mr. Gamull, of Craball, Hen- ry Gower, of Chester, shoemaker, John Johnson, alderman, <i>now his widow</i> William Cowley, gen., Richard Clarke, William Hale
Saughall Parva	All freeholders		
Stoke	Lord Gerard, of Gerard's-Bromley, sun- ciently the inheritance of ye Duttons of Dutton Thomas Bunbury, of Stanney	Moore Eye and a Brook	No other freeholder here
Storton, Mag. et Pva Stanlow	Sir William Stanley Mr. Poole, of Poole; it is a house and domains, near Pool, sunciently an abby	StanlowGrange	No other freeholders here No other freeholders free
Sutton Magna Sutton Parva Thingwall	Thomas Cholmondeley, of Vale Royal Thomas Cholmondeley, of Vale Royal, Esq. Sir William Stanley, of Hooton, the Baron of Kingston, in Ireland, and Earl of Shrewsbury, all claim; sunciently it was the Earl of Derby's		
Thornton Mayou, or Thornnton Hough	Mr. Dor Savage, of Leighton	New Hall  Thornton Grange Clatterbridge	Captain William Shipley, <i>now his son</i> <i>Andrew Shipley</i> , Thomas Cooke, <i>now</i> <i>William Cooke</i> , 1671 A bridgebetween Thornton and Brinstage

Asse. M.R. Towns.	Lords of ye said Towns.	Hamlets and places of note.	Freeholders.
Thurstaston	William Whitmore, Esq., of Thurstaston	Thurstaston Hall	
Tranmore, or Tranmail	Mr. Chalmersdeley, of Vale Royal, by the daughter and heir of — Minshull, of Wats-leath Minshull, who bought it of Holme	Holt-hill Wats-leath	Edward Gleave Richard Yokson, — Yokson, Mr. — Kent, of London, late — Holme, John Eccough, Mr. Geo. Langford, Richard Cowley, Edward Langford
Upton; hath a market day, and two faires yearly	Earl of Derby, late the inheritance of Boid, who sold the town to William, Earl of Derby, and the Hall to Charles, Earl of Derby	Derby House Overchurch	Jo. Minshull, of ML, now Mr. Chalmersdeley, of Vale Royal The name of the Church which stands about half a mile from the town, it having not a house nearer to it. Sir William Stanley, Thomas Hawkins, Thomas G. — — — — — Phoebus B. — — — — — Sir Thomas W. — — — — — Hocknoll of Hocknoll, Lord Chalmersdeley, Viscount Holmes
Woodbank, a hamlet in Saughall Magna	Thomas Hiccock		John Pemberton, of Chester, shoemaker, Leonard Band, Richard Coventry, Jo. Littler, William Bennett, Lawr. Booth, Hen. Rathbone, Mr. Glegg, of Gayton.
West Kirt y	Earl of Bridgewater; it belongs to Halton Fee Court		Earl of Derby, Sir Thomas Powell, Sir Ph. Egerton, Thomas Robinson, Richd. Yong, of Seacom, Hen. Bird, of Poulton, Shariott Massey, widow, Jo. Dobb, Thomas Sheriock
Wallasey	The King Lord	New Hall	Jo. Frogg, of Whitby, in Stoke parish, Thos. Hallwood, of Whitby, in Estham parish, Richard Pye, of Whitby, in Estham parish
Whitby			Robert Hittock, of Thurstaston, Nathaniel Leene; Richard Watt hath it to own portion
Woodchurch	Mr. Hugh Burgess. Mr. Burgess, of Dublin, hath the presentation; he bought it of Mr. Sudall, of Keele		William Forghall, Job, Hugh, and Samuel Bennett, Thomas Woods, William Bennett, now held by widow, Margaret Bagnall, of Brombro', Gilb. White, Will. Hay, Will. Rossall, of Trafford, Widow Wilson, relict of John; Henry Dean, now his widow, Samuel Bodson married his daughter and heir; Hamnett Bennett, of Chester, officier to Major.
Wylaston	All freeholders keep the court by turns		John Hayes, of Estham; John Sudden, of Hooton; Jo. Fletcher, Will. Greene, Jo. Robinson.
Chester City	The King is Lord of it, to whom they pay a cheife or —, and a pound of pepper yearly; estraites gathered by the Sheriff		

## MEMOIR

ON THE RAPID AND EXTENSIVE CHANGES WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE AT THE ENTRANCE  
TO THE RIVER MERSEY, AND THE MEANS NOW ADOPTED FOR ESTABLISHING AN EASY  
AND DIRECT ACCESS FOR VESSELS RESORTING THERETO.

BY JOS. BROOKS YATES, F.A.S., M.R.G.S., &c.

(READ BEFORE THE LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF LIVERPOOL, 1843.)

At a meeting of this society, held during the last session, and at two previous meetings of the "British Association for the Advancement of Science," Captain Denham presented some of the results of his useful and accurate survey of the harbour of Liverpool, and more particularly the buoying of a "new channel," which has been lately formed by nature, through sands stated to have appeared not long before above water. This channel has subsequently proved of the utmost value and importance to the trade of Liverpool.

The intricacy of the access to the river Mersey is well known. It arises from the accumulation, outside of its embouchure, of numerous beds of sand, which are frequently, and suddenly, changing their position and elevation, to the great horror and confusion of navigators.

It can scarcely be doubted that, at some remote period, the estuary of the Mersey did not exist at all, or if it did exist, it was in a very different and a very limited form; and further, that the bay now called Liverpool Bay, which lies between Formby Point and the island of Hilbre, was at the same time occupied by land composed partly of morass and partly of forest. If this hypothesis be correct, the waters of the Mersey and the Weaver must either have emptied themselves into the estuary of the Dee, or have wound their humble and narrow course into the Irish sea, through what are now called the "Banks of Burbo and Formby."

The ancient historians and geographers (including Ptolemy) evince so little acquaintance with the western parts of Britain, that no certain information can be derived, upon this head, from their writings. The Greeks and Romans, indeed, were ignorant, until the time of Julius Agricola, whether Britain was an island, or part of the continent; and after the Proprætor had resolved their doubts by sailing round it, they still held (amongst a multiplicity of errors) that our island extended itself eight hundred miles in length, and lay to the east of Spain. Were we to take them for our guides, we should at once arrive at the conclusion that the same outlet served for both rivers. Ptolemy, and Agathodemon, who illustrated his cosmography with maps, enumerate *one estuary only*, (*Seteia estuarium*,) as lying between the Ribble (*Belisama estuarium*) and the Great Ormshead; (*Ganganorum promontorium*;) and although one manuscript of Ptolemy (the Palatine) gives the river *Setobis* as intervening between the *Seteia estuarium* and the *promontorium Ganganorum*, it is evident that this river cannot be the Dee, inasmuch as it is stated to be one degree and one-third to the westward of the *Seteia*;—indeed, it appears clearly to be the Conway. Ptolemy gives no account of the internal course of the rivers of Albion, and all the earlier editions of his maps are equally uncommunicative. Mercator, however, in his beautiful edition of them, in 1578, lays down the course of the *Seteia* so as to correspond with the Dee of modern

times. From the much-debated etymology of the name Mersey, no certain conclusion can be derived. If, as seems probable, it was given to the river by Saxon or Friesian settlers, it by no means follows that the word *Meer-Zee* is to convey the idea of a *fresh water lake*, the same term having been bestowed by the Frieslanders upon the *Zeyder-Zee*, and other estuaries of a similar description in the Low Countries. On this subject, as well as the interpretation of the Ptolemaic appellation *Setantia*, of the inhabitants of Lancashire, reference may be had to the learned labours of Dr. Whitaker, the Rev. John Whitaker, and Mr. Brown, author of the "History of Great and Little Bolton."

Of the manuscript maps of our country, constructed in the *Middle Ages*, a few have survived to the present time, and lead to the same result. Neither in the famous manuscript map at Hereford Cathedral, nor in those which accompany Mathew Paris's History, can we find more than one estuary. Such, however, was the indolence or inexperience of the cosmographers of those days, that they were contented to adopt blindly the errors of Ptolemy, so that it becomes altogether useless to call in their testimony. The earliest existing map which gives separate outlets to the Dee and to the Mersey is one described by Gough in his "British Topography," vol. 1, p. 76. It was exhibited to the Society of Antiquaries in the year 1766, and was thought to have been constructed in the time of Edward the Third. Richard of Cirencester likewise, who wrote his work "*De situ Britanniae*," during the same reign, assigns to the Mersey an outlet and a course similar to the present, and describes it under the name of *Seteia*, as constituting together with the river Humber, (*Abus*), the southern boundary of the Roman province, called *Maxima*, or *Brigantia*.

A reference to Doomsday Book and other ancient muniments may lead us to infer that the mouth of this river and the interior of the estuary were, in the time of the Conqueror, in a considerable degree resembling what they now are.

On the whole, it appears almost useless to appeal to historical records upon this difficult subject. A surer guide will be found in the geological appearances now presented by the shores of Cheshire and Lancashire, which lead to the conclusion that a dense forest extended itself at some remote period, southerly, from Penwortham on the Ribble along these coasts, occupying the mouth of the Mersey, and covering the northern and western parts—probably the whole—of the hundred of Wirral, nearly as far as the city of Chester. (1)

"From Blacon Point to Hillase,  
The squirrel might leap from tree to tree,"

is quoted by Pennant (2) as a current saying among the inhabitants of Wirral in his time. Then we find in "Ormerod's History of Cheshire" (3) the following tradition as applicable to the northern parts of the hundred, that "a man might have gone from tree-top to tree-top, from the Meols stocks to Birkenhead." These Meols stocks were trunks of trees in the sea-shore above Newhall,—and Newhall,

(1) Mr. Greenhow, in his justly celebrated "Geological Map of England," (A.D. 1819,) has erroneously stated that the "subterranean forest terminates at the Mersey opposite Everton." A good account of the geological formation of the neighbourhood of Liverpool has been drawn up by the Rev. Theo. Dwyer, and is prefixed to Mr. T. B. Hall's "Flora of Liverpool," 12mo. 1838.

(2) Pennant's Tour in Wales, 4to, vol. 1 p. 28.

(3) Ormerod's Cheshire, vol. 1, p. 239.

afterwards Mockbeggar, is the edifice now called Leasowe Castle. The forest of Wirral was "disforested" in the year 1376, by King Edward III, in consequence of a request made some time before by the Black Prince on behalf of the inhabitants (1.) From the "sayings" above-mentioned it may be inferred that considerable remains of it must have been growing within the memory of man, though the country became afterwards extremely bare of timber, until replanted during the last century. In Domesday Book several detached woods are specified as existing in the 11th century in the western parts of Lancashire, as well as in Wirral. The shores of both counties, however, and especially those in the vicinity of the river Mersey on either side, contain at this day numberless trunks and roots of large forest trees, chiefly oak, and many of them standing erect as they grew, while extensive tracts of peat are observable in many places starting out among the sands. Vestiges of these woods are frequently to be found below the range of the tide around Mockbeggar. A correspondent of the "Gentleman's Magazine," in the year 1796, (vol. 66, p. 549,) describes the quantity of large trunks and roots on the Lancashire shore, between Formby and Crosby, as being immense, and gives an interesting engraving of them, as they at that time appeared. This writer contends that Paulinus Suetonius must have cut down or burnt the trees. Tacitus, however, makes no mention of this Roman general being in Lancashire, though he describes him as having had recourse to this expedient for dislodging the Druids, and other natives in his memorable expedition against the Isle of Anglesey. According to Dr. Leigh (2) and Dr. Aikin, (3) a part of the trunks which were standing near the mouth of the river Alt, "being in a line at equal distances, were undoubtedly planted." During the last fifty years much of the timber (which, when deeply imbedded, is found to be hard and black) has been removed from the coasts of both counties, for the uses of the neighbouring population, one person having carted away from a single field, in Crosby, nearly fifty loads; and the peat has diminished from the action of the elements. Yet much both of peat and of timber remain visible; (4) and even within the estuary of the Mersey, particularly at Knott's-hole, there may be seen at this day trunks of the same description, while higher up we meet with beds of peat, dipping into the river, which, under the action of high tides and rapid freshes in the rainy season, have suffered much diminution. The low land intervening between Wirral and Broxton hundreds where the Chester canal now passes, is found to contain shells and other marine productions. Through this valley it has been several times proposed to carry the river Dee into the Mersey.

It would appear, therefore, that a violent disruption must have taken place at the mouth of this estuary, by which enormous masses of sand and marl were thrown out; and this supposition is confirmed by the homogeneous structure of the strata, as now seen on either bank of the river. Slips of morass have taken place also, both at this and at other eras, although much of it may be now entirely hidden by a

(1) Cart. 47—51 Edward III, quoted by *Mssm. Lysons, Mag. Brit.* vol. 2, p. 407.

(2) Leigh's *Natural History of Lancashire, &c.*, 1700.

(3) Aikin's *History of the Country round Manchester*, p. 327.

(4) There is sometimes found oozing from the beds of turf in the interior, a black oily liquor, resembling asphaltum in colour and smell. Their quality is so antiseptic that perfect skeletons of stags, and even of the human species, have been found in them, which must have been deposited many centuries ago.

greater or less covering of mud. In March, 1838, while the late Mr. Nimmo was employed in surveying the shore, a number of human skeletons were discovered opposite the Llan, or Llanove, Lighthouse, at a distance of between one and two hundred yards below the flow of the tide. Their number, and the regularity and position in which they were laid, afforded pretty strong evidence that a churchyard, or, at least, a public burial-ground, had existed there at some unknown period. A similar depository for the dead is describable among the mud hills on the Lancashire shore, at Formby, though the tombs (many of which contain the remains of families of note in those parts, are now half covered by the shifting sands.

Prior to the erection of the present Llanove Lighthouse in 1763, another Lighthouse of that name existed, but nearer to the sea by half a mile, or upwards. This building, occupying a site which, at the time of its erection, appeared to be firm dry land, was rendered useless by the rapid encroachment of the watery element, which continued not only to sweep over the foundations of the old Lighthouse, but threatened to surround the new building, and, on the occurrence of wintry tempests, to pour itself through the valley of Bidston-marsh, which lies below the level of high water, into the Mersey. It was not until the sea had broken down the ridge of mud which had formed its barrier, and was making its way into the heart of the peninsula of Wirral, that a strong embankment, or sea-wall, was at length raised about fifteen years ago, which is now maintained with great care and cost by commissioners appointed under the provisions of an Act of Parliament passed in 1829. This embankment extends about a mile and a quarter in front of the present Lighthouse. An embankment is likewise raised on the Lancashire coast, opposite to the embouchure of the river Alt. In those parts which are less vulnerable, both coasts are protected by sandhills, which, however, are in continual danger of being blown away on the recurrence of strong western gales, so that it has been necessary to have recourse to legislative enactments for their preservation. Besides the above-mentioned act for Cheshire, three have been passed, namely, those of 1742, 1779, and 1812, by virtue of which rates are levied for the preservation of the Lancashire coast. Amongst other precautions they provide especially for the planting, steadily, of the rush, called *star*, or *lew*, (*ammophila arenarum* of Henslow, &c.) which is therein said to be, by experience, found the most effectual method of preserving these hills in a firm and solid state. A penalty of 20s. is leviable upon any person cutting or pulling up this plant, and any one within five miles in whose possession it may be found is to be adjudged the cutter of it. (1)

But however formidable may be the mutations thus produced upon the shore, they are small in comparison with those which still take place among the immense sandbanks surrounding the harbour, and which necessarily acquire an importance commensurate with the traffic of the great port of Liverpool. These banks are rapidly tossed to and fro by the stupendous force of the winds and tides, which spend their fury upon the western coasts, and they subside after every such encounter into shapes and elevations very different from their former ones. Having, moreover, no escape, they remain pent up in the bay. The number and importance of these changes can be best seen and appreciated by a comparison of the various charts that have been constructed at different periods by authority.

(1) This rush is extremely useful for household purposes, and has been recently applied with success to the manufacture of paper and pasteboard.

Prior to the year 1682, there existed no sea charts of the British coasts or harbours, except some very erroneous ones made by the Dutch. In that year King Charles II instructed Capt. Grenville Collins, his hydrographer, to make a survey of the coast and the channels, which, after the sanction and assistance of the Trinity Board had been obtained, was completed between that year and 1689. Capt. Collins's survey of the Dee and the Mersey was effected in 1687. At that period Liverpool, though beginning to rival Chester in foreign trade, still, as a port of entry, continued subordinate to the latter, and was denominated, in a return made in 1692 to the Exchequer, as "a member of the port of Chester." (1) All vessels, excepting those of extremely small dimensions, came to an anchor in Hoylake. Capt. Collins says,—“The great ships that belong to Liverpool put out at Hyle, or Highlake, part of their lading, until they are light enough to sail over the flats to Liverpool.” He also writes, “There is a channel near Formby to go into Liverpool, where is three fathom at low water on the bar; but this place is not buoyed or beacons, and so not known. The ships lie aground before the town of Liverpool. It is bad lying afloat before the town, by reason of the strong tides that run here.”

It is evident, therefore, that, in 1687, an excellent channel existed opposite to Formby Point, its soundings, as appears from the chart, ranging from three to ten fathoms; but that being “not buoyed and beacons,” it could not be used. The other access to Liverpool, namely, “the Rock Channel,” stated in Collins's chart to be “all dry at low water,” was the entrance at that time in common use, and having afterwards become considerably deeper, so continued (of course, at high water) until within these few years. (2.) The great bank, then called “Hyle-sand,” has undergone a complete change in figure and dimensions. A reference to Collins's chart shows that an extensive ridge ran along the middle of this bank, which was “dry at high water of the neap tides.” Through this ridge and the entire bank, a channel, now called the “Hilbre Swash,” three miles and a half long, and varying in depth from two to fourteen fathoms, has forced itself in a northerly direction from Hilbre Island towards the Light-ship.

It may be proper to advert here to the ancient and present state of the three rocks or islets (two being extremely small) called Hilbre, which lie within the distance of a nautical mile from the north-west extremity of Wirral. The name is a contraction of Hilburg's Eye, or Isle, the largest of the three (now used as a telegraph station, and a depot of the Trinity Board) having formerly contained a cell, dedicated to St. Hilburgh, and attached to the Abbey of St. Werburgh, in Chester. It continues, though twenty miles distant, to be included within the parish of St. Oswald, of that city. At present a person may pass to it over the sand, at low water of spring tides. From the *saying* above quoted, it may be inferred that the place was formerly a component part of the main land; but, since the period of the trees being swept away, whenever that event occurred, we may conclude that important changes have taken place. Leland, in his Itinerary, which was written in the reign of Henry VIII, expressly describes it as an island, but accessible at low water. In Humphrey Luyd's maps, constructed A.D. 1569, Hilbre (there written Ilbre) is represented as a peninsula, attached to the hundred of Wirral; but in Saxton's, which are dated

(1) Vide *Modern Practice of the Court of Exchequer*, 1731, 8vo.

(2) A channel has always existed, and still continues, running northerly, along the Lancashire coast; but this must not be confounded with the new diagonal channel called *the Victoria*, mentioned hereafter.



1573, it appears, as it now does, again in the form of an island. Loyd and Saxton were both likely to be correct, the former being a native of the neighbouring town of Denbigh, and its representative in Parliament; the latter having been employed nine years, under a Royal commission, in a survey of the counties of England. No accurate maps of our kingdom had appeared before.<sup>(1)</sup> Ormerod gives, from the Legends of Bradshaw, the monk of Chester Abbey, an account of the miraculous intervention of St. Werburgh in favour of Randle, Earl of Chester, by which certain sandbanks were suddenly raised to facilitate the escape of the pious Earl from the attack of Welsh brigands on his return from a pilgrimage.

Many other important changes might be enumerated, both upon the Cheshire and Lancashire coast: but we must confine ourselves to one going forward at present upon the latter, and which assumes, altogether, a novel character, from the circumstance of its being accelerated by human agency.

At the scientific meetings above mentioned, Captain Denham, then Marine Surveyor to the port, described at some length a new and important channel, which, about three or four years before, had been opened by nature opposite to Formby Point. It was carefully and expensively buoyed and lighted, and for several years afforded an advantageous passage to many thousand vessels. It ran, however, at right angles to the natural course of tide, and was, therefore, not likely to endure. Scarcely had its existence been announced, before its limits were observed to be rapidly contracting themselves, and it is at this moment almost hermetically sealed. At the same time there appeared indications that the other entrance to Liverpool, called the Horse Channel, was closing up, so that the commerce of that mighty emporium seemed likely to be destroyed, or, at all events, most woefully impaired, by the interruption of all access for eight hours out of the twenty-four. Under these circumstances, Captain Denham, with the able assistance of Lieutenant Lord, who has since succeeded him as Marine Surveyor to the port, was indefatigable in watching the shifting of the sands, and at length announced his opinion that, judging from the trending of the banks at that time, *a diagonal passage might be found*, touching in part upon the late channel, but *leading direct to the main sea, by dredging so as to aid the ebb current of the tide in its natural diagonal course* between the Lancashire and Cheshire shores. "This," he added, "would produce a better channel than had ever been before." The proposition was much opposed and jeered at, as a vain attempt to oppose, in an open sea, the power of the elements. But at length the operations were commenced, towards the close of the year 1838, by first buoying off the margins of the proposed channel with large green buoys, so as to inclose a passage of about a third of a mile wide and about three-quarters of a mile in length, which, if accomplished, would connect an interior pool, whose depth was eighteen to twenty-five feet, with the sea, where a sounding of twenty-five to forty-three feet water would be immediately found. An iron harrow, twelve feet across, having been constructed, was dragged backward and forward by the force of a hundred-horse steam-vessel over the intruding bank, the inner part of which was stated to rise forty-three feet higher than the outer or seaward part. The harrow at first used was flexible, being composed of lengths of old chain cable, spiked, and attached to a beam of African oak. This, however, was found too unwieldy, and its place is now supplied by an instrument twelve feet wide, and bearing some resemblance to a garden rake. It is, however, supplied with teeth on both sides, which are wrought into the shape of ploughshares, so as to turn

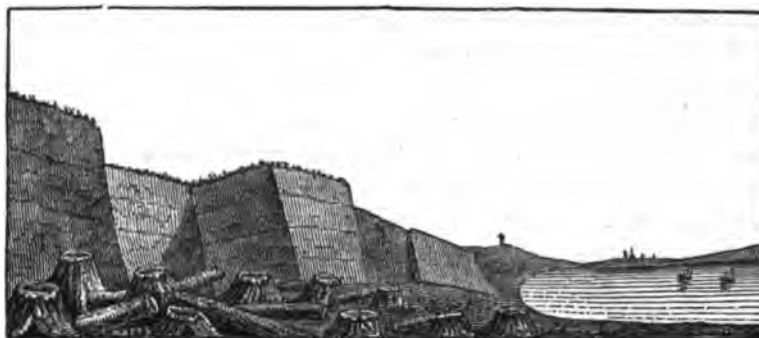
(1) Vide Ortelii Theatrum Orbis Antver, 1570, and Saxton's maps of English Counties, 1573.

the sand sideways. Another instrument is also used with great effect; it is the invention of Mr. Hartley, engineer to the Liverpool docks, and consists of an enormous wooden scraper, weighted with iron plates, and flanked with prongs on both sides.

The process of dredging was commenced at high water, and continued daily during six hours of ebb, whenever daylight could be had, or the weather was not too tempestuous. Notwithstanding a long cessation during the winter, the effect has been most surprising; an additional depth of upwards of four feet having been thus obtained throughout the whole extent of the bar, and by a continuous line of access. The velocity of the ebb-current, which frequently amounts in the narrows to six or seven miles an hour, is here much diminished by reason of the expansion of the bay. Nevertheless it is sufficient to carry out the sand and silt after it has been artificially torn up, and leave it in the shape of a shelf or plane, steeply declining into the deep water. Upon minute examination of the silt dredged from the channel, where a soft muddy bottom is found, it appeared to contain a small portion of peat, and weighed somewhat lighter than the sand found within the estuary. *The access to the harbour is far better than at any former period*, and there appears every probability of its being kept open for the future at a comparatively small expense. For vessels of ordinary dimensions it is practicable at all times; for large ships it is the earliest entrance to the port by three hours, there being a depth of eleven feet over the bar at low water of ordinary springs. All dredging has been suspended, the buoys completed, the land lighthouse, and the floating light-ship removed to their proper positions, and the channel is now recognised, by authority, as the *Victoria Channel*. Through it the greater part of the trade of Liverpool already passes, and it seems destined to remain in future the great avenue to the port. Though the means employed were novel, not having before been applied to sandbanks in the open sea, they had the advantage of simplicity, and were not very expensive. The complete success which attended their application, is a sufficient warrant for recommending them to the conservators of other harbours which may, in any measure, resemble Liverpool in physical conformation, or where human efforts are likely, in any degree, to aid the great mechanics of nature.

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The subjoined sketch is an exact copy of the engraving in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.



## ON THE GEOLOGY OF THE LOWER DIVISION OF WIRRAL.

THE whole of this district is composed of that division of the New Red Sandstone, called by the Germans *Keuper Sandstein*. It contains three subdivisions, or beds, namely, the Lower Red, the Central Yellow or White, and the Upper Red, the whole amounting to a very considerable thickness. The configuration of the district, which is conformable with that of Cheshire, a considerable part of Lancashire, and Warwickshire, in fact, with that which occurs wherever the formation in this country exists, is a series of low ridges running nearly due north and south, having their escarpments, with only one or two exceptions, (where they do occur,) towards the west. One of these exceptions is at Flaybrick, or Bidston-hill, being towards the east. The dip of the strata is towards the south-east, at an angle of from seven to eight degrees to the horizon. There are, however, some exceptions to this general condition, as at Storeton-hill, where there is an antedinal fault at the axis of elevation, and the strata dip at the same angle on each side.

The strike of the rock is towards the south-west. None of the ridges exceed 300 feet above the level of the sea. They have, apparently, been produced by the same forces, though in a secondary degree, as those which elevated the mountain ridges of North Wales, the parallelism prevailing throughout. This district has become celebrated in geological records, in consequence of impressions of a huge Batracian, called by Professor Owen, the *Labyrinthodon*, having been found in Storeton-hill, at a depth of between 30 and 40 feet from the surface. These impressions were found in the clay in five different superimposed beds, occupying a depth of from 5 to 6 feet, and were associated with impressions of tortoises, lizards, and crocodiles, and of that singular and extraordinary animal called the *Rynchosaurus*, which Professor Owen has shown was a creature having the body of a reptile, with the beak and feet resembling those of a bird. This animal was pronounced by that distinguished comparative anatomist, to be one of the most extraordinary that he had ever investigated.

These remains, however interesting to the geologist, were superseded by the novel discovery of impressions of rain-drops which were found in three different beds. These indicated different meteorological conditions of the atmosphere, one showing a heavy shower, accompanied with a high wind; the two other, from the smallness of the pit marks, and the more superficial depths to which the drops have penetrated the clay, were apparently more gentle in their character. The impressions of gigantic *Ficoidea* have also been found in the rock, and at different depths: one at Woodside was exposed for several years on the margin of Wallasey Pool, now occupied by the new docks. Several were found on a bed in Storeton Quarry, at a depth of about 50 feet from the surface, one of which measured upwards of 30 feet in length, and covered an area of about 300 superficial feet.

J. C.

## APPENDIX.

## SUBMARINE FOREST AT LEASOWE.

In the month of April 1846 a party consisting of fourteen Members of the LITERARY and PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY of Liverpool, made an excursion through the parishes of Bidston and Wallasey to the Submarine Forest at Leasowe. They were anxious to make an examination for themselves of certain facts which are said to exist there, as well as of others, and to put upon the Society's records the results of that examination. A detailed account of their proceedings was subsequently prepared, and read at a meeting of the members of the Institution, by the Rev. A. Hume, LL.D. The kindness of this gentleman, whose devotion to the interests of science is so well known, has permitted the publication of the following extracts from this interesting memoir.

"The first considerable halt was made at the eastern side of Bidston hill. There a separate hill exhibits itself, called Flaybrick, attached to Bidston; in fact, a spur or projection of the Wirral ridge, which makes its commencement, or termination, abruptly about this position. The somewhat singular fact was noticed respecting it, that its escarpment or steep side is on the east, or towards the river; so that the ridge has thus two escarpments, one of which is a phenomenon, the converse of what is presented in the other ridges of this district, and of those generally in Great Britain. It is well known, for example, that England, as a whole, is elevated on the west side, and depressed on the east; that the bold ridges and abrupt escarpments of the country occur in Wales, while, on the contrary, the gradual declivity is to the east, till we come to the agricultural districts of Essex, Buckingham, York, and Durham, the marshes of Cambridge and Lincoln, the alluvial deposits of Norfolk and Suffolk, and the Doggerbank in the German ocean. But it is not so well known that this arrangement prevails in minute portions of the country, as well as on a large scale, and that the ridges of any given district invariably, or almost invariably, exhibit their escarpments on the west side, and their general slope on the east. We are quite prepared, therefore, for one of the phenomena presented at Bidston, but not for the other, and it becomes a matter of serious inquiry, whether the escarpment on the bluff of Flaybrick be an original exception to this rule, or the peculiarity be owing to mechanical agency, natural, or artificial.

"At the bottom of the hill is an extensive deposit of a peculiar kind of clay, geologically called *diluvium*, common all over Cheshire and Lancashire, and used extensively in brickmaking. Near the foot of the cliff is an accumulation of debris; while up its sides, and along the little projecting terraces, there is an accumulation of earth, and a considerable growth of brushwood. But the vertical portions of the cliff are either bare, or easily exhibited from beneath a thin coating of moss; and they exhibit, in the most unequivocal way, proofs of mechanical action. From a very high point of the ridge, (if not from the highest point), there are the clearest marks of abrasion, mechanically, and that not by

solid substances, but by water. How the water contrived to reach the hill, or how the hill bowed its head and submitted its face to the water, is another consideration. The facts, however, are those which have been stated.

"Descending again to the bottom of the hill, it is impossible to disregard other indications of the former presence of water. For example, a considerable portion of the extended brickfield, and especially the ground at the foot of the cliff, is covered with a peculiar kind of sand, indurated in some places, and loose in others, but in all cases such as the course of a river would deposit. An examination of this sand, brings to light new facts: it is found, to contain, in some places, considerable quantities of shells, precisely of the same kind as those now found in the estuary of the Mersey. Some of these are well known as the *Turritellites*, the *Lutrea compressa*, &c., &c."

"On the north end, at some distance from Bidston Hill, little craggy eminences, or knolls, exhibited the strongest proofs of abrasion by water, when cleared from the moss and turf with which they were overgrown. The last of these, which was examined, was a low mound, about thirty or forty perches south-east of the ancient church; it seemed to be the last of a series, gradually subsiding towards the shore, and exhibiting, on its top and sides, indeed at all points to which access could be obtained, the clearest marks of mechanical abrasion by water."

It having been so arranged by the selection of the day for the excursion, that the party should reach the shore at the period of low water, they proceeded at once to the place called the Submarine Forest, entering on the beach at a point between the Castle and the Lighthouse.

"To those who expected that the long expanse of sand between the embankment and the water was covered with stumps of trees of various heights, like a forest over which a hurricane had swept, nothing could be more disappointing. Apparently there was nothing worthy of notice beyond the ordinary extent of sand, diversified as usual with little rivulets flowing towards the tide, and with occasional pools, or patches of clay. The first indication of a forest was a projecting moss, like a gigantic nodule of clay, or like a projecting piece of rock. One of the party, however, drew attention to the fact that it was distinctly vegetable matter; in fact, a veritable stump, exhibiting its fracture horizontally, or nearly so, and its cleavage more or less vertically. Among the various projections or truncated pieces of root, large quantities of clay and sand had effected a lodgment, and small portions of sea-weed were also attached to it. I am not aware that any other instance was noticed of a root apparently occupying the position where it had sent forth a stem, and thrown out branches and leaves: but in this instance it appears to me that there could be no doubt on the matter. It is not a little extraordinary, however, to find even a single root maintaining its anchorage, with such a strain of sea upon its tiny cables, where the material in which it is imbedded is liable to constant change, and where even its own substance is being daily rotted and frittered away.

"Passing on along the sands, other indications of vegetable matter began to exhibit themselves. In some instances the clayey substance seemed to be impregnated with decayed vegetable matter; so that occasionally an ordinary observer could hardly tell whether a certain mass was merely a piece of blackened loam, or a portion of rotten wood, of about the consistency of cheese. Passing still westward, the vegetable appearances became more frequent and more distinct; the whole area presented a

carboniferous appearance, so that one could have predicted the existence of vegetable matter, even without the finding of a single specimen. But specimens existed in abundance; in one part the woody matter stood out in relief, like the veins of harder material, on the face of a weather-worn stone, suggesting the idea that it had been held in solution, and infiltrated into the cracks of the sand. In another, the margin of a streamlet, from four to six inches high, appeared to be a piece of darkened *lias*, but, on breaking it with the hand, it proved to be a portion of wood, very soft, and probably expanded, and holding the water like a sponge. Numerous instances occurred in which the timber so found admitted of the finger being readily thrust into it, in the same manner as into a piece of turf bog. Occasionally on breaking off a piece of the earthly matter, various strata of vegetable deposit appeared, like the marks that so frequently show themselves in coal, or like the leaves which appear in the fractures of various kinds of rock. Sometimes the wood was not in such a state of decomposition, but on the contrary, comparatively fresh and strong. Some was evidently birch; and some evidently oak; perhaps there were other kinds also. In some instances it retained the bark, in others this was wanting. A few of the specimens, instead of giving evidence of rottenness, exhibited marks of partial petrification; as if minute portions of fine sand had been infiltrated into the substance of the wood, occasioning in it a shorter breakage, and rendering it almost impossible to cut it with a knife.

"It would be giving a very erroneous impression, however, of the interest felt in the excursion if it were suggested that the relics of wood were the only objects of interest that presented themselves along the shore. Nature presents various fields for the contemplation of inquirers: and it is only the man of barren intellect who can regard any department of creation as destitute of interest. It is not a mere poetical idea, but the record of frequent and interesting experience, that any one who pleases to search, can find

"Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

"In *Geology*, for example, the stratification of the district was explained,† the progressive changes were pointed out, and the peculiarities of quicksand were noticed. The phenomena of ripple marks were carefully noticed and explained, and were considered particularly interesting; for while the stupid gazer finds nothing in them worthy of notice, the philosophic observer sees an alphabet which enables him to read a chapter in Nature's own history of our globe.

"In *Zoology*, the attention was drawn to various facts. At one time, the starfish was exhibited, from which one, two, or even three members had been lopped, wriggling its slow way across the sand. Again, the *Beroë* was shown clinging to a small projection, by the side of a pool; and the little *Medusa* protruded its tentacula, or showed the quivering circulation of its fluids through its transparent sides."

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† Mr. John Cunningham, F.G.S.,—to whom I am indebted for the communication on the Geology of Wirral, on page 25 of this Appendix,—stated some additional particulars respecting the stratification at Bidston, and the peculiar elevations at certain portions of the Wirral ridge, which were in perfect harmony with his interesting and original theory of the formation and changes of the district. W. W. M.

Dr. Inman stated some facts respecting the specimens of animated nature which he had collected, from which it would seem that the *Medusa* possesses the extraordinary capability of spontaneous or voluntary dissolution."

"In *Botany* several interesting specimens of fuci were collected; and the peculiar "lie" of the imbedded wood was observed, and explanations given by Dr. Dickinson; the singular appearance of the bark suggesting speculations respecting its nature and age.

"In *Chemistry* curiosity was excited by some interesting suggestions relative to the carbonaceous matter that was everywhere spread around, and its peculiar condition was regarded as a most valuable exemplification of the various processes and stages in the formation of coal." The party were fortunate in having explanations on this subject from that eminent practical chemist Dr. Brett, F.L.S. by whom they were accompanied.

"A large horn was purchased from a labouring man, said to have been procured near the surface of the sand below high water mark, at a place where, comparatively recently, there was a superincumbent mass of earth of the depth of several feet; it was partially fossilized, and from its indications, compared with the account given, there could be no doubt of the substantial correctness of the latter. Mr. Archer at first expressed some doubts whether it was the horn of any native animal, or whether it might not have been thrown overboard from some vessel from foreign parts. He had, however, upon more particular examination arrived at the conclusion it was the horn of the red deer of this country, *Cervus elephas*; that it belonged to an animal between six and seven years old, and from its brittle, semi-fossil state, in all probability had existed coterminously with the Forest.\* It was perforated by the shell of the *Pholas candidus*."

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\* The conclusion of Mr. Archer is doubtless correct; he was probably not then aware that antlers of the same species had been previously found on the banks of the Birken,—and several have since been discovered in the excavations making near Wallasey Pool, in connection with the Birkenhead Dock works, see *ante*, page 138.

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